

MEDIA ADVISORY

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STEM Council names five Iowa STEM CAPS Programs

Centers for Advanced Professional Studies will serve as models across the state

CEDAR FALLS, Iowa – The Iowa Governor's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Advisory Council took a major step in bringing innovative STEM education solutions to Iowa last month by naming five winners of a competition to build Iowa STEM Centers for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) programs.

The STEM Council committed this year to identifying the most successful models known to connect schools with community-based business and industry to drive an understanding of how STEM concepts learned in school apply to careers. After studying various STEM schools across the country, the CAPS model of the Blue Valley School District of Overland Park, Kan., was determined by STEM Council leaders to be the closest to what Iowa seeks. Rather than a central destination, the Iowa team favored a "satellite" version being implemented by a consortium of districts in the North Kansas City region.

Iowa STEM CAPS programs will unite businesses and education for the organic development of STEM programs matching their local industry strengths, challenges and resources. Students at Iowa STEM CAPS sites will learn at business and industry sites or at an industry site located on a school campus.

"The STEM CAPS satellite model will allow students to experience the industry or business environment firsthand," said Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, co-chair of the STEM Council. "That experience is vital to prepare students for STEM success in college or career training after high school, and it allows business and industry to introduce students to outstanding career opportunities."

The STEM Council Executive Committee voted unanimously in December to award and support five competitively-selected school partnerships, bringing to the table a total cost-share commitment of \$773,509. The \$150,000 STEM Council investment is divided up among these five applicants that includes funding for professional development:

- Bettendorf/Pleasant Valley;
- Cedar Rapids/College Community (or Iowa BIG);
- Kirkwood CC/University of Iowa/Clear Creek Amana/Iowa City/Regina/Solon/Tipton/West Branch/College Community;
- Northeast; and
- Rock Valley (or Rocket Manufacturing).

"These programs will unite local businesses and educators into a collaborative STEM environment, which is a key priority of the STEM Council," said Vermeer CEO Mary Andringa, co-chair of the STEM Council. "These partnerships represent a wonderful new paradigm for education that may ultimately shape the future of our state's economic development."

Each selected program submitted in-depth proposals, considering factors like education driven by business and industry need, rigorous, relevant and dynamic STEM curriculum and authentic partnerships. Their Iowa STEM CAPS models bring various strengths in community partnerships, district demographics and program focus.

During spring 2015, the STEM Council will hold professional development opportunities for potential and current districts and business and industry partners to learn more about Iowa STEM CAPS and strengthen statewide networks.

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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 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 Council is chaired by Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds and Vermeer Corp. CEO Mary Andringa. For more information, visit www.IowaSTEM.gov.