



STEM BEST® Program Businesses Engaging Students and Teachers

Community-Based Partnerships

The challenges faced by today's educators are numerous and complex. Effective partnerships are a successful educational strategy and can bring relevance and rigor to students' learning environments.

Community Partners: An applicant is **required** to have community partners explicitly defining their role in the proposal.

Community Partners may include:

- Business and Industry
- Higher Education
- Nonprofit organizations
- Economic Development Groups
- Workforce Development Groups
- Other organizations

Local and Regional Business Partners

As the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for a Competitive Workforce states, "The business community is the number one consumer of the public education system and, therefore, must be an involved and engaged stakeholder in the education of America's children." Businesses success depends on a well-educated and adaptable pool of young talent emerging from America's high schools and colleges to maintain stability and growth. The resources, skills and knowledge businesses and their employees bring to the table have broad significance for ensuring young adults reach their full potential. As it might be expected, there is no single framework for a school-business partnership. Partnerships between education and the business community can:

- Provide work-based learning experiences that transfer knowledge and skills between the classroom and the work setting
- Help schools build career cultures that empower students
- Help educators align curriculum to build Iowa's talent pipeline
- Build meaningful relationships with mentors
- Provide tours, speakers and facilities
- Provide funding and equipment for classrooms and workspaces

Economic and Workforce Development Partners

The foundation of STEM BEST® Program models is the connection between education and local economic and workforce needs. Successful implementation requires districts to identify local workforce needs as a driving force for curriculum, course strands offered and program focus.

School District Clusters

To provide students with experiences and opportunities that are sustainable, schools are encouraged to investigate a shared STEM BEST® Program (cluster/hub). Examples of cluster partnerships awarded previously can be accessed at www.iowaSTEM.gov/STEMBEST. Collaboration across school districts fosters the sharing of best practices and a team approach to student achievement while maximizing business and community resources.

Higher Education Partners

The role of higher education in the STEM BEST® Program model may be a partnership between institutions of higher education and STEM BEST® Programs. Models may include exploring new strategies to strengthen ties and to extend learning opportunities for **all students**. Higher education partners may wish to extend dedicated professional time (FTE) to work with the applicant to provide professional development, curricula development or business engagement.