

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, October 23, 2017

STEM Council welcomes new STEM BEST Partners across Iowa

Nineteen school-business partnerships equipped to bridge the world of work to the classroom

CEDAR FALLS, Iowa – The Iowa Governor's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Advisory Council has awarded 19 new STEM BEST® ([Businesses Engaging Students and Teachers](#)) Partnerships across Iowa.

STEM BEST Partners transform typical K-12 classroom environments and methods to unite the workplace with the classroom and develop clear pathways from STEM education to STEM careers in the state. From 2014 through 2016, the STEM Council established eighteen STEM BEST Partnerships that exemplify school-business partnerships uniting what is taught and learned in K-12 mathematics, science, technology and engineering classes with what skills, knowledge and behaviors are going to be needed at work.

"Iowa companies must be able to hire enough skilled workers so they can grow and innovate, and more Iowans deserve to have the skills needed for rewarding careers," said Gov. Kim Reynolds, co-chair of the STEM Council. "Through STEM BEST, educators and business leaders work together with students to strengthen Iowa's talent pipeline and close the skills gap. STEM BEST is one of many programs that promise to help reach our Future Ready Iowa goal of 70 percent of Iowa's workforce having education or training beyond high school by 2025."

The STEM Council's executive committee voted unanimously last Thursday to award and support 19 of 31 proposed partnerships that each bring to the table a dollar-for-dollar cost sharing commitment and, in some instances, well beyond their fifty percent cost sharing commitment. The Council's STEM BEST grants themselves derive from a pool of funds that represent both public and private investments in STEM. Funds are to be used for equipping modern collaborative workspaces and training educators in workplace-classroom integration. Awardees are:

- Albia Community Schools in the South Central STEM Region
- Alburnett Schools in the Southeast STEM Region
- Ankeny Schools in the South Central STEM Region
- Atlantic Community Schools in the Southwest STEM Region
- Cedar Falls Community Schools in the Northeast STEM Region
- Chariton Community Schools of the South Central STEM Region
- Charles City, New Hampton, Osage and Rudd-Rockford-Marble Rock Community School in the Northeast STEM Region
- Davenport West High School in the Southeast STEM Region
- Des Moines Hoover High School in the South Central STEM Region
- IKM-Manning Community School District of the Southwest STEM Region
- Iowa City Community School Schools in the Southeast STEM Region
- Marshalltown Learning Academy of the North Central STEM Region
- Muscatine Community Schools with West Liberty Elementary and Muscatine Community College in the Southeast STEM Region
- Newton High School of the South Central STEM Region
- North Iowa Community School District of the North Central STEM Region
- Oelwein Community Schools in the Northeast STEM Region

- Southwest Valley Middle School of Villisca in the Southwest STEM Region
- Spirit Lake Middle School of the Northwest STEM Region
- West Liberty Community Schools in the Southeast STEM Region

“STEM BEST fosters an environment where communities match the needs of the local workforce to the skills students learn and gain in the classroom,” said Accumold President and CEO Roger Hargens, co-chair of the STEM Council. “Creating these school-business partnerships is a key priority of the STEM Council with the belief that they will meet the STEM career demand in their communities and shape the future of Iowa’s economy.”

Each selected program submitted an in-depth proposal, considering factors like education driven by industry need, rigorous, relevant and dynamic STEM curriculum and authentic partnerships. These models bring various strengths in community partnerships, district demographics and program focus and will serve as models for others around the state.

To learn more about the model and the current eighteen STEM BEST partners, visit www.iowaSTEM.gov/STEMBEST.

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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 Governor Kim Reynolds and Accumold President and CEO Roger Hargens. For more information, visit <https://iowastem.gov/>.