



Written Testimony

Submitted by: Colorado STEM Ecosystem and Key Partners

Re: HB23-1198, “Teacher Externship Program For Science Technology Engineering And Math Disciplines” (<https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb23-1198>)

Why?

Preparing Colorado K-12 students to be postsecondary and workforce ready is essential to strengthening and diversifying the local Colorado talent pipeline, advancing thriving communities, and accelerating economic vitality.

Current initiatives to ensure student Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR), such as ICAP (Individual Career and Academic Plan) and the School Counselor Corps Grant Program (SCCGP) provide some support for schools to invest in educators to meaningfully increase career awareness to ensure Colorado students are prepared for their bright futures, but more effort is needed.

Providing educator externships that immerse educators in an-industry based experience is a research-backed practice that translates into increased support for students and their families. It is a crucial piece of the puzzle to close both educational and workforce gaps in Colorado.

What?

This Bill sponsors the development of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Educator Externships. Educator Externships are a unique professional development opportunity where teachers are immersed in a company to learn about the skills and competencies needed to succeed in that industry or career path. The experience both 1) strengthens an educator’s teaching abilities and 2) brings relevant, real-world context into the classroom. Externships are often transformative for educators, students, and industry partners. Impacting just one teacher allows a company to reach between 20-150 students each year.

How?

It is important to adopt legislation establishing a STEM educator externship through the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment that 1) establishes employer incentives to engage in offering opportunities for educators; and 2) establishes educator incentives to gain industry-based professional development.

State funding for establishment of this program is respectfully requested.

Impact?

Establishment of and investment in STEM educator externships will:



- Invest in **EDUCATORS**, honoring them as the leaders they are in preparing Colorado students for their bright futures.
- Prepare **STUDENTS** and their **FAMILIES** to better navigate their unique and informed paths toward their bright futures.
- Strengthen and diversify Colorado's **TALENT PIPELINE**.

Please accept this as a full endorsement of the establishment of a Colorado STEM Educator Externship program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Janelle M. Johnson
Executive Director
Colorado STEM Ecosystem

PARTNER SIGNATURES

A cross-sector of partners recognize the value of a Colorado Educator Externship program. Partners represent K-12 education, employers, industry associations, postsecondary, nonprofits, and more from across Colorado and the nation. Partners continue to [sign on](#) to support this important work. Partners are listed in the order in which they signed on.



Martha K Patton
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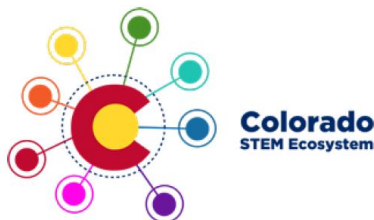
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Uniting Partners. Transforming Learning.

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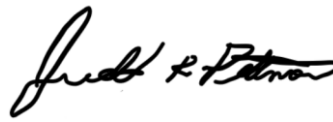
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Colorado Succeeds

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