



# NW Washington STEM

Helping Island, San Juan, Skagit, and Whatcom Students Dream Big

## NW Washington STEM Network Winter News and Notes...

Even with the pandemic and the limitations on in-person programs and events, the Northwest Washington STEM Network has had tremendous success this Fall in helping our students and leveraging local and state resources for our schools. Here are a few highlights.



### STEM Like Me! To Go!

As we wait for students and industry mentors to have the ability to get back into classrooms, we have created a hybrid model alternative. Starting in January, we will have the tools to bring mentors into the classroom virtually so they can still have that interaction with students and provide them with Career Awareness and Exploration.

### Rural High Need Grant from Career Connect Washington

The North Puget Sound Regional Career Connect Washington Network proposal was a collaboration between Snohomish STEM Network, NW Washington STEM Network, and the NWESD189 Career Connected Learning (CCL) Coordinator.

The grant funds two programs serving rural communities across our five-county region. **Rural**



**Career Connections:** Develop and implement an operational model to be replicated for rural districts that connects the community and school district to career connected learning. Bre Urness-Straight, CCL Coordinator NWESD189, is starting initial work with the Darrington, Concrete and Blaine school districts. **Virtual Career Connected Learning:** The grant allow us to research and adopt a set of best practices for providing virtual CCL in rural communities that are lacking resources to

## Winter 2020

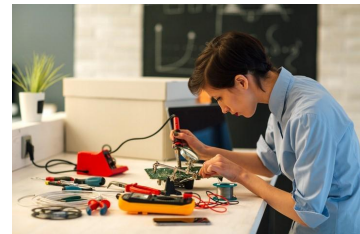
### News and Notes

[WSOS Scholarships Open](#)

[YES Whatcom Career Fair](#)

[Free At-Home Resources](#)

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## About Us

The Northwest Washington STEM Network provides the resources and a collaborative environment for our community to work together to prepare future generations for economic success and connect them with STEM career opportunities in our region.

Our STEM Network creates a coordinated effort with planning partners and local stakeholder organizations in Island, San Juan, Skagit, and Whatcom counties to serve as a catalyst for initiatives, leveraging resources and programs and building community.

The Network is a part of Washington STEM and operates from the Northwest Educational Service District 189.

We invite you to join with us and participate in creating an even brighter future for our students, our community, and our economy. Come join us!

## Partners

[Skagit STEM Network](#)

implement CCL within their own school districts. This grant is funding STEM like ME! to GO!

### Shell Puget Sound Refinery STEM Partnership

Thank you, Shell Puget Sound Refinery for your continuing support of our students and Career Connected Learning!



Michelle Judson (R), Director, NW Washington STEM Network, and Shaun Doffing (L), Program Manager, Skagit STEM Network, are all smiles as they receive a \$10,000 grant from Cory Ertel, External Relations Manager for the Shell Puget Sound Refinery, to support CCL.

"The Shell Puget Sound Refinery is proud to once again support the Skagit STEM Network in delivering CCL experiences to students across Skagit County," said Ertel. "STEM education is one of our priority areas when it comes to giving back and supporting our local community, and the Skagit STEM Network is an innovative and forward-thinking community partner making a real impact in providing quality STEM education enrichment activities to local students."

### School-Based Internship

A partnership has been built with Skagit PUD to run an internship that brings the business to the school. Students will have the opportunity to learn about diverse careers over a 5-week span from people working in those careers and then solve a real-life problem that business is facing. Once the PUD pilot program runs, we will work with other local businesses from diverse industries in Skagit to bring this type of internship opportunity to as many students as possible.

### Early Math programs in Skagit County

The Skagit Early Childhood Consortia received an Early Math Catalyst Grant from Washington STEM to deliver Early Math programs in Skagit County and support delivery of programs through their partners in Island, San Juan, and Whatcom Counties. The goal of this work is to improve kindergarten readiness in math for children who are furthest from opportunity, including children living in



[Whatcom STEM](#)

[FuturesNW](#)

[Youth Engagement Initiative,](#)  
[Whatcom Business Alliance](#)

[Northwest Educational Service](#)  
[District 189](#)

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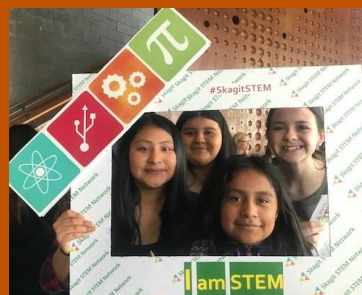
poverty, children of color, and children living in rural areas. They are hosting train session for key partners and early learning stakeholders in the following programs: Paint to Learn, Math Anywhere, and Vroom.

"Training via zoom is a new concept for some of us and we are challenged to find ways to bring the inspiration of STEM to life on a virtual platform," said Susan Goss, Program Coordinator, United General District 304. "Paint to Learn is a unique community engagement tool integrating art and STEM learning concepts in fun and creative activities. We are pleased with how positive and successful we were in introducing STEM concepts and inspiring parents to want to share another Paint to Learn event in small zoom groups!"

To date, Paint to Learn has had 28 trainings and shared with more than 160 early childhood professionals, childcare providers, and parents. To learn more, click [here](#).

### Spotlight on Women in STEM

We were so disappointed to cancel our 3rd annual Spotlight event last March, but we are excited to announce that planning is underway to offer this program virtually in spring 2021. While the in-person program is tough to compete with, taking the platform to a live virtual stage will broaden access to more students than the 450 young women who could attend annually.



### High School and Beyond Plan

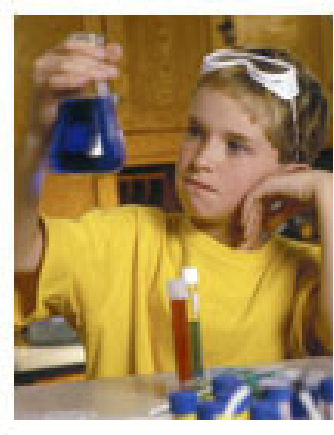
The goal of this project is to ensure that the High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) and Career Connected Learning (CCL) are authentic experiences for students supported by educators and the local community. An outcome of this project is to align the goals and efforts of the HSBP with the CCL work being done by the Washington STEM and Career Connect WA Regional Networks and others in our region.

"The HSBP is a fantastic opportunity to help students identify their strengths and passions and help them find a career pathway that fits them best," said Shaun Doffing, Program Manager, Skagit STEM Network.

To learn more, click [here](#).

### Financial Aid Completion Catalyst and FAFSA Proviso Grants

The overarching goal of this project is to improve Financial Aid Application Completion results in Northwest Washington. Systems level goals are to improve College



Bound Scholarship (CBS) through FAFSA/WAFSA completion rates. Elements include work in partnership with WA STEM and the Washington Student Achievement Council to develop a data dashboard tracking student cohorts from 8th grade through post-secondary completion, identifying and creating a best practices playbook, and improving the impact of state-wide initiatives.

The grant also funds partner organizations to deliver programs targeting family engagement in communities furthest from opportunity:

[The Foundation for Academic Endeavors Parent Academy](#) held sessions in English and Spanish led by Skagit Valley College, College Success Foundation and Burlington-Edison School District experts. Topics included "How to Support Your Student to Attend College," "Skagit Valley College, You Belong Here," and a "College Bound Scholarship Workshop."

Increasing the scope of work for the [FuturesNW](#) From One to Many Program, which helps Lummi Nation students and parents/guardians

throughout the school year navigate the high school to post-secondary transition. The grant also supports FuturesNW (in partnership with the Washington Student Achievement Council) to run workshops and assist high school students who are experiencing financial hardship or low socioeconomic status in completing FAFSA or WASFA applications in Skagit and Whatcom Counties. All districts in Skagit have either participated in a regional FAFSA filing event or been connected to FuturesNW as a resource to support their work.

### **Skagit STEM Leadership**

Thanks to the support of all Skagit school districts, Shaun Doffing is now the Skagit STEM Program Manager, delivering a portfolio of Skagit Career Connected Learning (CCL) programs to K-12 districts across the county and working to pivot existing programs to the current virtual and hybrid environment. He is also moving forward with a new school-based internship program and a project to align CCL programs more directly to High School and Beyond plans.

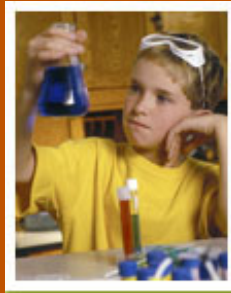
"It's been a fantastic experience working closely with all seven school districts in Skagit County to help ensure Career Connected Learning opportunities and equity in programs throughout the entire valley," Doffing said. "Every building is very welcoming to me and I genuinely enjoy the sharing of best practices with everyone I get to work with."



## "Knowledge is Power (and Money): Closing Financial Aid Gaps in Washington"

Was the theme of a panel discussion at the Washington STEM Summit, which was attended by education, government, community, and businesses leaders throughout Washington.

Michelle Judson, NW Washington STEM Network Director participated in the panel and highlighted successful partnerships in the region with FuturesNW, a Bellingham based non-profit whose mission is to level the socio-economic playing field by supporting students from under-served communities to achieve their career and college dreams; and The Foundation for Academic Endeavors, a summer educational program for low-income, primarily Latino and homeless children, preschool through 10th grade in Skagit County.



She also shared successful case studies from the Burlington-Edison and Nooksack K-12 School Districts. In 2019, these districts had the highest financial aid completion rates in Skagit and Whatcom counties, respectively.

## 2021 WSOS Baccalaureate Scholarship Application Opens

Applications are now being accepted for the Baccalaureate Scholarship provided by the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship program!

This scholarship provides Washington State residents with up to \$22,500 towards an eligible degree in a STEM



or health care field. This scholarship can be used to cover tuition, fees, and other indirect costs of attendance such as housing, transportation, food and more. Funding can be used for any eligible STEM or health care degree at any eligible public or private college or university in Washington State.

The deadline to apply is February 11, 2021.

The Career and Technical Scholarship opens on January 6, 2021.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

## 2020 VIRTUAL JOB FAIR BHS JUNIORS & SENIORS



## YES Whatcom hosts its first Virtual Career Fair in Whatcom County

YES Whatcom, the youth engagement initiative of the Whatcom Business Alliance (WBA), hosted its first virtual career fair centered around Blaine High School on December 4, logging over 200 participants from six different school districts. YES Whatcom is a partner organization of the Northwest Washington STEM Network.

The career fair featured 18 businesses and organizations from six different industry clusters over a Zoom meeting. The format allowed for two different breakout sessions with participants choosing among Manufacturing and Construction; Law Enforcement and Military; Finance and Business Management; Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources; Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics; and Health Services.

"Now more than ever, our students need to know that they have a bright future in Whatcom County, and that the business community is ready to welcome our graduates to the workforce," said Laura McKinney, Chair of YES Whatcom and Alcoa's NW Government Affairs & Public Relations Director.

Each breakout room had three panelists and a moderator to facilitate the discussion. Panelists each described their company, their role at the company, and different pathways students could take to work at their company. Panelists were chosen from Whatcom County specifically for their ability to speak about the broad range of local career opportunities. Students, teachers, parents, and career counselors were able to hear about local opportunities for family wage jobs for those straight out of high school all the way to advanced degrees required.

YES Whatcom is a 501c3 created by the Whatcom Business Alliance with the mission to build bridges between the emergent workforce and the local business community. For more information, click [here](#).



## Free At-Home Learning Resources

With all of us experiencing school and community facility closures, the NW Washington STEM Network wanted to pass along some suggested free resources to keep life-long learning going in fun, creative and engaging ways.

The resources [here](#) are provided as suggestions and do not imply a product or service endorsement.



*Wishing you a peaceful, happy, and healthy holiday season and a prosperous New Year!*

[Click here](#) to like and follow the NW Washington STEM Network on Facebook.



**Click here** to like and follow the Skagit STEM Network on Facebook.



**To learn more, connect and get involved:**

**[www.NWWashingtonSTEM.org](http://www.NWWashingtonSTEM.org)**

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