

RCW 28A.188.050 Statewide STEM organization. (1) To the extent funds are appropriated specifically for this purpose, the office of financial management shall contract with a statewide nonprofit organization with expertise in promoting and supporting STEM education from early learning through postsecondary education. The purpose of the contract is to identify, test, and develop scalable, cost-effective, and evidence-based approaches for increasing learning opportunities and improving educational outcomes in STEM that are aligned with the STEM framework for action and accountability. The activities to be conducted under the contract shall be as provided in this section, with specific performance expectations negotiated between the office of the governor, the office of financial management, and the selected organization.

(2) Under the terms of the contract, the organization selected under this section shall:

(a) Conduct a statewide communications campaign to expand awareness of the importance of STEM literacy and the opportunities presented by STEM education and careers, particularly as a strategy to close the educational opportunity gap for disadvantaged students and promote economic development in disadvantaged communities;

(b) Expand regional networks of schools, institutions of higher education, educational service districts, STEM businesses, and community-based organizations to align STEM learning opportunities with best practices and local economic development;

(c) Establish an innovation fund and offer competitive grants to support innovative practices in STEM education, from early learning through postsecondary education, including developing models of interdisciplinary instruction and project-based learning;

(d) Expand STEM professional development opportunities for educators, faculty, and principals, including developing technology-enabled learning systems to support implementation of state learning standards; and

(e) Create opportunities to extend STEM learning into early learning programs. [2013 2nd sp.s. c 25 s 4.]