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Iowa STEM School Partners will Pilot New Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Model

A portion of Iowa's \$1.8 million ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion grant from the U.S. Department of Labor will fund the effort

DES MOINES, IA – The Iowa Governor's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Advisory Council recently awarded four of Iowa's STEM school partners, known as STEM BEST® (Business Engaging Students and Teachers) to pilot a new Quality Pre-Apprenticeship model.

The U.S. Department of Labor awarded a \$1.8 million ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion grant to Iowa last fall to grow the Registered Apprenticeship system in Iowa as a solution for employers seeking to build a qualified workforce. The grant partners, including Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa Department of Corrections, Iowa Department of Education and the STEM Council, proposed a Quality Pre-Apprenticeship model within this grant to help secondary students meet the basic qualifications for entry into one or more Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the state.

"We view Registered Apprenticeship Programs as a key strategy for meeting the Future Ready Iowa goal where 70 percent of Iowa's workforce will have some type of post-secondary education by 2025," said Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, co-chair of the STEM Council. "Now with Quality Pre-Apprenticeship, we can introduce these fast-track careers to Iowa's youth at an even younger age, ultimately qualifying them for Registered Apprenticeship pathways that fill the workforce pipeline in Iowa in fields of high demand."

The STEM Council will lead this portion of the grant, using \$200,000 to kick-start Quality Pre-Apprenticeship focused on high-demand, STEM-related occupations in partnership with these four STEM BEST partners selected for their in-depth proposals:

- **Boone High School** — Semester-length, project-based opportunities through the School Career Connections and vocational rehabilitation programs initially in plumbing and electrical fields. Workplace partners include Kruck Plumbing & Heating Co. and ABC of Iowa Apprenticeship & Training Trust.
- **Muscatine Community School District** — In partnership with Muscatine Community College, students will earn certificates in electronics and up to 38 credits toward an Engineering Technology Electromechanical Diploma or certificates in culinary arts and up to 32 credits toward a Culinary Arts Diploma. Workplace partners include HNI and Allsteel.

- **Spencer High School** — Students take part in a construction extended career experience, receiving on-site job training for an average of 12.5 hours per week along with earning a 10-hour OSHA certification. Workplace partners include Milford Electric and Midwestern Mechanical.
- **Waukee APEX** — High school seniors continue learning past the initial APEX course in the manufacturing, construction and technology fields. Workplace partners include MidAmerican Energy, Weitz Company, Master Builders of Iowa, Neumann Brothers Construction, Remodelworks, Pillar, LightEdge Solutions and Accumold.

“These four STEM BEST partners continue to make strong connections with the local businesses in their communities,” said Kemin Industries President and CEO Dr. Chris Nelson, co-chair of the STEM Council. “This new pilot opportunity will build on what they've already established and will help students earn applicable credentials when they graduate high school to further their education in some of the most in-demand careers in our state.”

In their proposals, the four awarded STEM BEST partners showed proven partnerships with local workplace partners, some of which already take part in Registered Apprenticeship Programs, a vision for Quality Pre-Apprenticeship for secondary students, a mission for recruiting students in underrepresented groups in STEM and plans for evaluation, modeling for neighboring schools and sustainability. These partners will be asked to deliver a “how-to manual” for other schools and partners throughout the state to help them replicate Quality Pre-Apprenticeship in their communities.

Beth Townsend, Director, Iowa Workforce Development, said the STEM BEST partners will help to expand Registered Apprenticeship to youth, one of the targeted populations identified in the grant.

“Introducing high school students to careers that they can pursue through a Registered Apprenticeship is a winning solution for students, their parents and employers,” Townsend said. “The average wage per year is \$60,820 for a worker who completed a Registered Apprenticeship in Iowa. Because it is a learn-and-earn model, employers receive immediate help for their employment needs. And parents are thrilled when their child can obtain a well-paying job without incurring student debt.”

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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 Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds and Kemin Industries President and CEO Dr. Chris Nelson. For more information, visit www.iowaSTEM.gov.



About Iowa STEM BEST®

The impetus for Iowa's STEM BEST (Businesses Engaging Students and Teachers) initiative is to bridge the chasm that has emerged in recent decades between the world of education and the world of work. Launched in 2014 through the STEM Council, currently 18 school-business partnerships have been established, ranging from rural schools with singular manufacturing partners to regional multi-district education partners connecting to dozens of local business partners. The signature aspects of STEM BEST are co-planned curriculum, applied learning and authentic work space for students, and co-professional development for educators collaborating with business partners. A total of 35 schools and over 150 business partners currently comprise Iowa's STEM BEST network.

About ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant

Iowa is focused on achieving four goals through the \$1.8 million ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant. Goal #1 is to grow the number of Registered Apprentices. Goal #2 is to start 143 Registered Apprenticeship Programs in Iowa. Goal #3 is to help employers start or grow Registered Apprenticeship Programs in high-growth, high-tech industries like health care, information technology and advanced manufacturing. Goal #4 is to expand opportunities for women, minorities, veterans, youth and individuals with disabilities by 10 percent. Iowa Workforce Development is collaborating with the U.S. Department of Labor, Iowa Office of Apprenticeship and partners throughout the state to meet the grant goals.

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