New education coalition connects students to region’s STEM “power supply”

Somewhere City, Favorite State—Students’ skills development in the critical fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) will get a boost next month when STEM 4 All, a coalition of local schools, nonprofits, and industry, introduces a new network of STEM learning opportunities to all children in the region.

Educators say that student learning outcomes improve when all of the places children learn—home, school, libraries, museums, community events—work together to help them connect different learning experiences to each other.

“STEM 4 All is a coordinated effort to connect the region’s STEM programs into a single integrated circuit,” said program director Lisa Hawley. “Wiring these programs together will improve students’ STEM education outcomes by expanding their access to critical learning resources, especially in underserved communities.” STEM 4 All will power up the region’s STEM preparedness by plugging more students into the infrastructure of STEM programming in the area. It will also transfer a surge of energy into local schools so that teachers can build on those extracurricular experiences in the classroom.
Hawley said the process of learning STEM skills can be compared to a current of electricity flowing through a machine: “STEM education really happens when all the components are wired together. Kids need opportunities to see how the building exhibit they played with at the children’s museum is connected to the tour they took at the local engineering plant and the experiments they are doing in science class at school.”

As the nation’s workforce needs increasingly demand STEM skills, the number of STEM educational programs in the region is climbing. How deeply local communities and employers benefit from the STEM economy, however, depends on how many students have the opportunity to participate in these critical programs and how well the programs synch their efforts.

STEM 4 All will launch at the annual education fair next month with an activities booth, several on-site STEM competitions, an interactive map of the region’s STEM programming, and opportunities for families to plug into the STEM circuit.

More information is available at www.STEM4ALL.org

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