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THE NEXT GENERATION OF STEM EDUCATION – INNOVATION, BUSINESSES and EDUCATION CREATE AN AZ STEM SCHOOL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

*First AZ STEM SCHOOL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE Brings Together 57 Schools
From Across the State to Innovate the Next Generation of STEM Education in Schools*

TEMPE, AZ, April 12, 2016 – Arizona SciTech, the state’s leading innovator and proponent of STEM education, announces the launch of a joint initiative between hi-tech businesses, community members, educators, students, and parents to create the first ever **AZ STEM School Community of Practice**. A Community of Practice is based upon the latest business strategy, where various stakeholders come together; they understand that knowledge is an asset that can be shared for the greater good. These cross-stakeholder teams help each other, share information, build relationships and learn from one another. Teams then leverage their collective existing knowledge to design innovative solutions to the problems and challenges they have identified.

Arizona SciTech along with Intel, Arizona Science Center and the Maricopa Education Service Agency are leading the initiative as part of a STEM ecosystem within the [STEM Funders Network](#).

The first cohort of schools to be accepted into the new **AZ STEM School Community of Practice consists of 57 forward-thinking, creative schools dedicated to sharing best practices and finding solutions to educate Arizona’s youths in the field of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)**. School teams across Arizona, each with representation from community and industry, school leadership, educators, teachers and students, will help each other, share information, build relationships and learn from one another. Broader matters to address will be identified by the participants to collaborate and design innovative solutions to the problems and challenges of educating Arizona’s youths in the field of STEM; to prepare them to meet the high tech needs of the future.

Jeremy Babendure, PhD, Executive Director of AZ SciTech remarked on the highly successful initial collaboration, “We anticipated the first cohort would be made up of 20 school teams. We are proud to announce 57 teams from 26 districts have affirmed their commitment to join. This overwhelming response confirms the interest and passion of Arizona Schools for STEM education and their desire to work collaboratively to transform our STEM ecosystem.”

Several schools had various reasons for being included in the **AZ STEM School Community of Practice**:

“We can collaborate to develop practices that will set everyone on a course of student achievement. Building those relationships with others in the educational and business field will

enhance our ability to teach students and look at ways to bring our community together on our STEM journey”

“In order to provide our kids with quality STEM education, we need to keep learning ourselves. We need to know and learn what other schools are doing well, and we need to learn from those schools.”

“Participation in the AZ STEM School Community of Practice would provide the opportunity to see how other schools and districts are implementing STEM curriculum at all levels of academia.”

“In the first year, the collaborative group will be able to develop supportive resources for all schools to easily access, share ideas of best practices...support student needs, discuss processes and systems for developing a STEM program... build relationships with other STEM education leaders.”

“As a group, we would be able to give STEM programs a louder voice across Arizona to bring more attention to all of the opportunities it has to offer our students.”

“As members of the AZ STEM School Community of Practice, we can also accomplish a sense of direction. Because many schools are in different points along their STEM journey... focus our attention and learning in a direction that will benefit all of its members. Everyone can feel like they are on the same path, even if they are in different places. That sense of unity will take away the fear of making a mistake or failing, and empower schools and teams to take chances... build a foundation that can grow as more schools join this community”.

STEM is all about innovation. The AZ STEM School Community of Practice is a first of its kind and as Renee Levin, Intel Community Affairs & Education Manager commented, “The entire ‘team’ involved with the **AZ STEM School Community of Practice** is in actuality a dream team.”

The kickoff meeting for **AZ STEM School Community of Practice** will take place at the SRP Pera Club (1 East Continental Drive, Tempe) on Wednesday, May 4, 2016 from 11:30 am – 3:30 pm.

For more information about the **AZ STEM School Community of Practice** and please visit: <http://www.azstemcop.org>. A full list of the schools involved follows:

Agua Fria High School District

Verrado High School

Amphitheater Unified School District

Lulu Walker Elementary School

Avondale Elementary School District

Centerra Mirage STEM Academy

Copper Trails School

Michael Anderson School

Cave Creek Unified School District

Desert Sun Academy

Chandler Unified School District

Andersen Elementary School

Arizona College Preparatory Oakland Campus

Basha High School

Chandler High School

Conley Elementary School

Frye Elementary School

Hamilton High School
Weinberg Elementary School

Creighton Elementary School District

William T. Machan Elementary School

Deer Valley Unified School District

Canyon Springs STEM Academy
Legend Springs Elementary School
Sandra Day O'Connor High School
Sierra Verde STEM Academy
West Wing School

Dysart Unified School District

Canyon Ridge School
Thompson Ranch Elementary School

Fort Huachuca Unified School District

Colonel Smith Middle School

Gilbert Public Schools

Patterson Elementary School

Glendale Elementary School District

Discovery Elementary School

Higley Elementary School District

Bridges Elementary School

Isaac Elementary School District

Alta E. Butler Elementary School
Morris K. Udall Middle School
Moya Elementary School

Littleton Elementary School District

Estrella Vista Elementary School

Madison Elementary School District

Madison Park Middle School

Marana Unified School District

Coyote Elementary School
Quail Run Elementary School
Rattlesnake Ridge Elementary School
Twin Peaks Elementary School

Mesa Public Schools

Mendoza Elementary School
Red Mountain High School
Sirrinc Elementary School

Paradise Valley Unified School District

Desert Shadows Elementary School
Fireside Elementary School

Phoenix Elementary School District

Kenilworth School

Queen Creek Unified School District

Gateway Polytechnic Academy
Queen Creek Middle School

Roosevelt Elementary School District

Bernard Black Elementary School

Saddle Mountain Unified School District

Tartesso Elementary School

Scottsdale Unified School District

Navajo Elementary School

Tempe Elementary School District

Fees College Preparatory Middle School

Tolleson Elementary School District

Tolleson Union High School District

University High School

Washington Elementary School District

Orangewood Elementary School

Individual Schools (Charter and Private)

Brophy College Preparatory
Gilbert Arts Academy
Grande Innovation Academy
Imagine West Gilbert
Sonoran Schools
SySTEM Phoenix
Western School of Science and Technology

About AZ STEM COP

The AZ STEM Community of Practices is a diverse collaboration of 55 school communities that empowers practitioners to learn from one another and transform how science, technology engineering and math (STEM) impacts schools and Arizona's future workforce. The community involves all aspects of Arizona's future STEM workforce including industry and community leaders, school leadership, educators, teachers, students and parents. The **AZ STEM Community of Practice** is an initiative of the Arizona SciTech Ecosystem in partnership with Intel, Arizona Science Center, Maricopa Education Service Agency and the National STEM Funders Network.

About Arizona SciTech

Through the process of spearheading one of the nation's largest celebrations of science, technology and innovation, Arizona SciTech has cultivated dozens of regional STEM ecosystems in Arizona each involving diverse collaborations in industry, academia, arts, civic, community and K-12 education. Arizona SciTech is anchored at the Arizona Commerce Authority, in collaboration with additional foundational partners including the Arizona Technology Council Foundation, Arizona Science Center, Arizona State University, the University of Arizona and Arizona Board of Regents. Visit azscitech.org for more information.