

# 2020-2021 IMPACT REPORT

**EMERGING  
STRONGER**



**TODAY'S STUDENTS ARE  
TOMORROW'S EMPLOYEES**



## Our Mission

Improve the educational opportunities of students in the Twin Counties, cradle to career, by facilitating collaboration between our schools, community colleges, our community-based organizations and our employers.

## Our Ultimate Goal

Build a Strong Local Talent Pipeline

## Our Work

1. Promote Career Awareness
2. Expand Work-Based Learning Experiences
3. Create Seamless Pathway & Industry-Recognized Credentials
4. Facilitate Employer & Education Partnerships

*STEP creates venues for education and business leaders to dialogue on challenges, share stories of success, generate ideas for new initiatives, and leverage and connect resources. Thank you to our numerous employer and community partners, our multitude of volunteers, and our educators who embrace the idea of connecting classroom to career.*

## 2020-2021 Board of Directors

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**Staff:**  
Pamela Gould- Executive Director  
Vlvian Edmondson- Education Specialist

# MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS

During the 2020-2021 school year, with students and teachers adjusting to digital learning and many industries utilizing a hybrid work setting, STEP convened its partners and rapidly adapted to the needs of the local school systems and community colleges. Our organization shifted from in-person events to a virtual setting and allocated resources to activities with the highest beneficial impact on students. With this pivot, some of the data show a decline in overall participation and pathway enrollment.

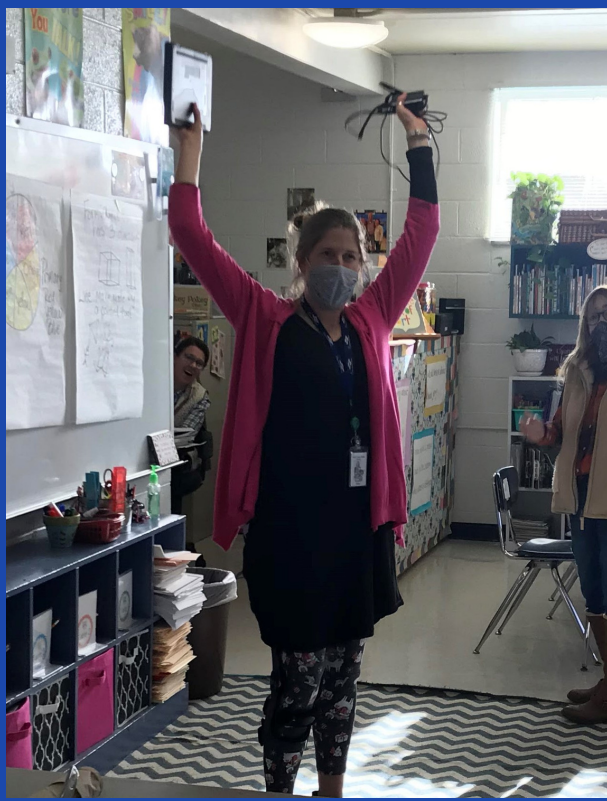
Despite the challenges, partnerships increased and the year ended with a regional strategy session to examine workforce development trends and determine a regional focus for the future. STEP would like to recognize the hard work of our educators and local employers during the most trying time in recent history. We continue to be devoted to our mission and are hopeful that with lessons learned and deep reflection, the Twin Counties will emerge stronger.



*Reginald Silver* Board Chair

*Pamela Gould* Executive Director





## MINI-GRANTS

7

Recipients

#workHERE mini-grants were funded through the generosity of local industry partners and the ZSR Community Fund. The purpose of the #workHERE mini-grants is to test ideas, expand promising efforts or achieve greater impact through STEAM with a career/company focus and future pathway connection.

The #workHERE initiative is a regional effort to close the information gap by expanding career awareness within the Twin Counties through work-based learning experiences and creating seamless pathways that lead to employment.

**\$21,150**  
Total Awarded

**2600**

Students Impacted

Grants were awarded on a competitive basis to educators for worthy projects that show the promise of benefiting students and improving educational performance.



# LEVERAGING RESOURCES



North Carolina Business Committee for Education provided over \$220,000 in combined funding to Edgecombe County Public Schools and Nash County Public Schools for implementation of student tech team-led Help Desks. Tech-savvy students are able to trouble shoot and solve technology problems with multiple devices. The teams alleviate some of the demands on the IT departments and support the virtual learning infrastructure.



## FACILITATING COLLABORATION



### NA 1 Residency Program

Nine recent Nash County Public Schools Nurse Aide 1 graduates participated in a Residency Program with UNC Nash Healthcare. The program allowed the graduates to gain 840 hours of Nurse Aide 1 work experience during the summer prior to entering college.



### Pop Up Internet Cafes

Organized 22 free WiFi access locations for students throughout the Twin Counties.



### STEM Lab at Carver Elementary School

Solicited funding from Suddenlink to support the STEM and Makerspace initiative at Carver Elementary School in Pinetops. STEM resources were purchased to create a community-based engineering design experience.



### #workHERE Regional Strategy Session

80 educators, employers and community stakeholders brainstormed and strategized the imbalance in talent supply and demand.

# LUNCH & LEARNS

*Showcasing careers & community colleges*

## 330 participants

STEP hosted a series of Virtual Lunch & Learns focused on local companies, careers and skills needed to earn a livable wage. The fall series included:

- *Women in Engineering*
- *Careers in Power & Energy*
- *Healthcare Careers in the Twin Counties*

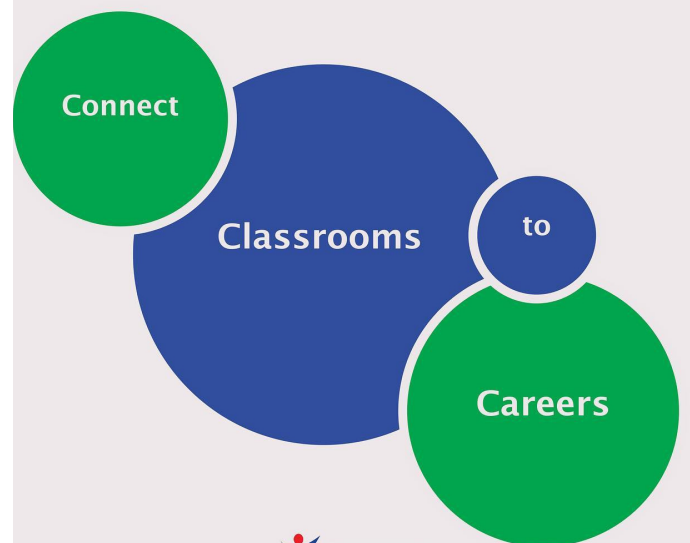
The spring series targeted graduating seniors and post-secondary students ready for the world of work. The topics included:

- *Where's the Money? Exploring Local Careers*
- *What are Employers Really Looking For? Resume & Interview Tips*
- *What's the Big Deal about Soft Skills?*

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**90%**  
of Lunch & Learn  
participants  
stated they were  
more  
likely to consider  
a local career.

### WHAT WE DO?



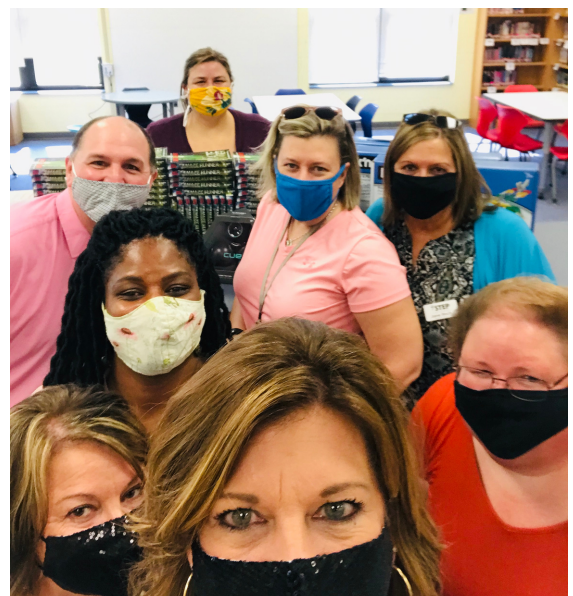
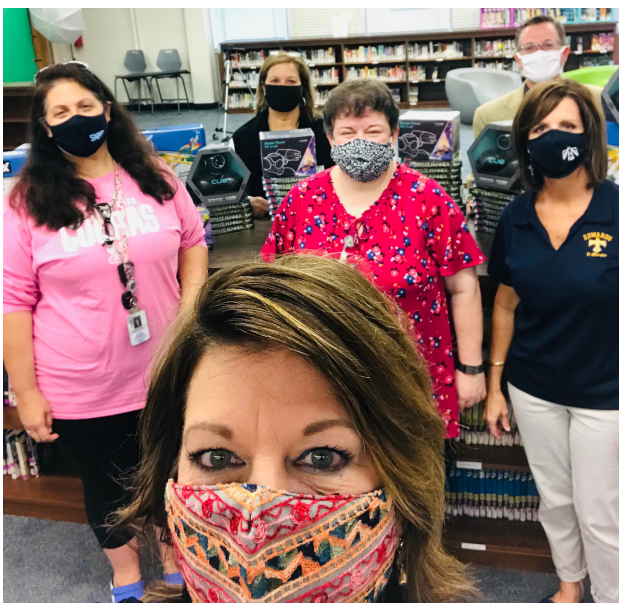
# Twin Counties STEM Design Challenge Goes Virtual



**21 future engineers  
competing from three counties**

"STEP is doing an awesome job! The students may not understand it now, but your type of programs are what make an impact on future engineers and getting people interested and involved in STEM programs."

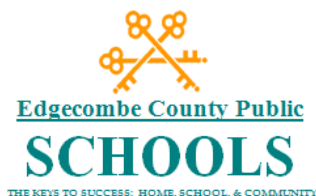
Tim Brownell, Engineer/Volunteer, Keihin



**STEM Coaches Make It Happen**



# SUSTAINING PARTNERS



United Way  
Tar River Region



Z. Smith Reynolds  
FOUNDATION



*Thank you partners and volunteers.*

## CONTACT:

STEP  
P.O. Box 6802  
100 Coastline St., Suite 203  
Rocky Mount, NC 27802  
252-446-0113

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