

2021-2022 IMPACT REPORT

Today's Students Are Tomorrow's Employees

Celebrating **10 YEARS** of Growing Our Economy in the Twin-Counties



Shyrese Bowden, *Business Liaison*;
Pamela Gould, *Executive Director*; &
Vivian Edmondson, *Education Specialist*
(LEFT TO RIGHT)

Dear Friends of STEP,

Where did 10 years go, and where have they taken STEP? A game changer for the Twin-Counties, STEP began as the vision of several key business and education leaders. Their goal was to help our community meet the workforce needs of the future, while improving and supporting our local schools through effective partnerships.

As a cross-sector collaborative, STEP tackles challenges too complex for any single organization, institution, or sector to resolve alone. Our Board of Directors is comprised of leaders from our two school systems, two community colleges, three local governments, key employers, and community stakeholders.

We are proud to have formed a robust work-based learning system in Nash and Edgecombe Counties during our 10 years in action. With the strong support of future-minded members of our business community, numerous initiatives have been implemented. STEP's successes have directly impacted students and educators—and our employers are reaping benefits.

Do we still have work to do? Absolutely, but let's take time during our anniversary year to celebrate our "wins":

- Taking our place as a leader in the workforce collaborative space in North Carolina.
- Being selected as a myFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaborative, a statewide initiative launched by nCIMPACT Initiative.
- Receiving recognition from the National School Public Relations Association and the National ACT Summit for collaboration.
- Winning the Coastal Credit Union Power of Sharing Hometown Hero Award.

Keep reading for more about our accomplishments and how you can get involved! We invite other companies and small business owners to join us on our journey of increasing career awareness and building our talent pipeline in the Twin-Counties for the benefit of the entire community.

Thank you for supporting STEP and helping us make our community a better place for all to live and work!

STEP's successes have directly impacted students and educators—and our employers are reaping benefits.

STEP Board of Directors

Reuben Blackwell, *OIC, Inc.*

Dr. Valerie Bridges,
Edgecombe County Schools

Parnell Bryant, *Cummins-RMEP*

Lige Daughtridge, *Rocky Mount City Council*

Summer Dickinson, *Hitachi-Astemo*

Dr. Steven Ellis, *Nash County Schools*

John Griffin, *Crown LSP Group*

Patrick Heins, *Vidant Edgecombe Hospital*

Dr. Lew Hunnicutt, *Nash Community College*

John Judd, *Cummins-RMEP*

Dr. Gregory McLeod,
Edgecombe Community College

Ginny Mohrbutter, *United Way*

Reginald Silver, *Nash County School Board*

Ralph Webb,
Edgecombe County Commissioners

Gwen Wilkins, *Nash County Commissioners*

Dr. Evelyn Shaw-Wilson,
Edgecombe County School Board

Michael Williams, *Turning Board Workforce Development Board*

Henrietta Zalkind,
Down East Partnership for Children

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2021-2022

EMPLOYER IN THE FOYER

Connecting Employers Directly to Tomorrow's Workforce

800 Students/Potential Employees

25 Employers



Serenity Peoples



NASH UNC HealthCare

Patient Safety Assistant

Serenity Peoples, Rocky Mount High School, was hired as a Patient Safety Assistant at Nash UNC Healthcare: "While attending the Employer in the Foyer, I met HR Manager Shelley Morgan. She gave me her email and a list of jobs I could get without a college degree...."



Karey Pierre



Southwest Edgecombe High School

Career Development Counselor

Karey Pierre, Career Development Counselor at Southwest Edgecombe High School, reports: "We had multiple students receive full-time employment from ABB, Cummins, and Pfizer, as well as several 11th graders who found summer jobs from the Employer in the Foyer event."



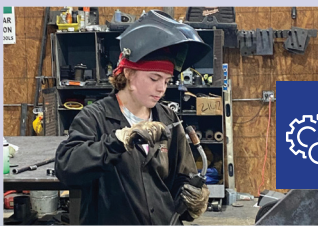
Robert Sanchez



Rocky Mount Radiator Works

Technician Assistant

Robert Sanchez, CITI High School senior, loves working on automobiles and had a job shadowing experience that led to employment. Through the Pathway Partner program at CITI, he and his classmates visited Rocky Mount Radiator Works. Robert is now on the road to success with this terrific local company.



Mary Samuel Palmer



Trans Tech Energy

Welder

High School senior Mary Samuel Palmer landed the perfect welding job with local company Trans Tech Energy as a result of a site visit and company tour for seniors that STEP coordinated. She can now stay close to family and work in a setting where she can continually improve her skills.

What is STEP?

STEP is a cross-sector collaborative that brings education, business, & government together to ensure:

Our region's competitiveness via a future-ready workforce.

The availability of compelling career opportunities that keep our residents home or bring them back.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2021-2022

MINI GRANTS

Expanding Career Awareness
& Accelerating Career
Readiness with STEAM

14 Recipients

\$17,720 Total Funds Awarded

7,135 Students Impacted



Mini Grants to
Individual Teachers
Spark New
Opportunities

The mini grants achieved numerous objectives, including testing new ideas, expanding promising existing efforts, and achieving greater instructional impact through STEAM-based learning activities with a career/company focus and seamless pathways to employment. The generosity of local industry partners made the #workHERE mini grants possible.

"We are so fortunate to have STEP as an educational partner here in the Twin-Counties. They fully funded the grant, 'Drones for Digital Learning and Art.' The arts are often overlooked when implementing new technology; this was a great opportunity to really showcase the 'A' in 'STEAM.'"

CAROLINE AYCOCK, K-12 INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY COACH, NASH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TEACHERS@WORK: Twin-Counties

Providing Educators with Insights
Regarding Career Skills that Today's
Students Need

12 Teacher Externs

1,330 Students Impacted



Continuing
Education for
Teachers

Twelve teacher externs worked a total of 384 hours at local companies. These educators gained invaluable insights and hands-on experiences regarding the mindsets and technical skills that today's students will need to be successful in the workplace.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2021-2022

LEVERAGING RESOURCES

Providing Students with Hands-On STEM Experiences

\$7,400 Total Funds Awarded

6 Types of Advanced STEM Materials



Implementing a STEM Lab for Elementary School Students

Optimum (Suddenlink) provided over \$7,400 to G.W. Carver Elementary School in Edgecombe County for the implementation of a STEM Lab in the Media Center/ Learning Commons. The lab is equipped with programmable Dash Robots, Dash Xylophones, Dash Launcher, Dash Sketch Kit, Code and Go Robot Mouse STEM Kits, and Makey Makey STEM Kits. These tools are encouraging learning through hands-on experiences that require students to think critically, collaborate, communicate, and innovate.

“Thanks to the generosity of Optimum, students at G.W. Carver Elementary School have been able to learn and explore with a variety of STEM materials. The scholars have engaged in various activities including using coding to program drones to fly, coding Dash and Dot robots, and exploring circuitry with Makey Makeys and fruits and vegetables.”

KEVIN ROBERTS, DIGITAL & LEARNING SPECIALIST, EDGECOMBE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FACILITATING COLLABORATION

Achieving Exponential Success through Partnerships

Regional Working Group

Advisory Board Model



Early Childhood Workforce Development

STEP was instrumental in forming a regional working group to evaluate the status of the current early childhood workforce, identify barriers from the providers' perspectives, and formulate a plan for paid internships and pre-apprenticeships.

CITI High School Business Board

STEP created an advisory board model for the Center for Industry, Technology, & Innovation, a technical high school in Nash County Public Schools. We recruited two employer partners per career pathway called Pathway Partners to offer work-based learning experiences, academic support through mentorships, guest speakers, and job opportunities to students.

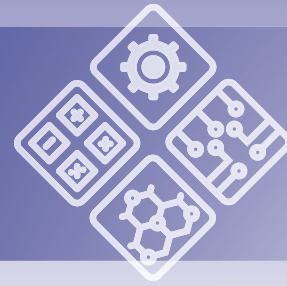
“STEP provides the connection for our students between the classroom and real-world employment. They are a wonderful partner, and with their support, our students are getting what they need to be successful citizens.”

DALE WELLS, WORK-BASED LEARNING COORDINATOR, CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION, NASH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2021-2022

STEP'S ANNUAL STEM COMPETITIONS

Connecting Designing, Building, & Coding Skills to Careers



154 Future Engineers

14 Elementary Schools



Twin-Counties Brick City Engineer Challenge

Pfizer sponsored our Twin-Counties Brick City Engineer Challenge. More than 150 future engineers at 14 local elementary schools participated in this fun event. Young people were able to make the connection between completing construction projects with building-block toys and developing real-world skills to be applied in the workplace.



243 Student Participants

288 Hours of Engagement with Local Engineers & Employers

Twin-Counties STEM Design Challenge & Invention Convention

More than 240 students and coaches took over the Rocky Mount Event Center on April Fool's Day—but no one was fooling around when it came to the competitions. In the STEM Design Challenge, students completed a literary competition, a design component, and a coding challenge. Invention Convention teams displayed their manufactured products and presented their business and marketing plans to a panel of judges. This event was made possible by our team sponsors, consulting engineers, and (Optimum) Suddenlink.

What is STEP?

STEP connects the dots from cradle to career, ensuring that young people in Nash and Edgecombe Counties are exposed to and fully prepared for the 21st century jobs our region offers. Our activities help develop the following:

Career Awareness

Work-Based Learning Experiences

Seamless Pathways to Industry-Recognized Credentials

Employer & Education Partnerships



STEP is much more than a workforce program.
We are a unique and essential economic development partner in the Twin-Counties.

Our Mission

STEP, Strategic Twin-Counties Education Partnership, is improving the educational opportunities for students in the Twin-Counties—cradle to career—by facilitating collaboration between our schools, our community colleges, our community-based organizations, and our employers.

Our ultimate goal is to build a strong local talent pipeline for the mutual benefit of employers and employees. We want to partner with you!

Here are just a few of the many ways you can help ensure that today's students become exceptional employees:

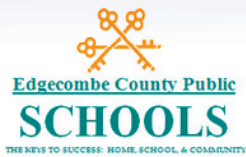
- Provide internships at your organization so that students can gain experience, explore their interests, develop skills, network with professionals, and earn school credit.
- Offer short-term teacher externships that could involve shadowing a professional during their work day, informational interviews, facility tours, participation in facility activities, and more.
- Donate equipment for training purposes.
- Serve on a program specific advisory board.
- Provide information about your industry at a lunch-and-learn event.
- Host one-day job shadowing experiences for students.
- Serve as a guest speaker to share current issues within your company and workforce.

OUR STUDENTS want to be prepared for the jobs available in their home towns. Employers in the Twin-Counties need to develop a local skilled workforce. Contact us today to find out more about how you can become involved in our work!

info@step-partnership.org • 252.446.0113

THANK YOU *to all of our* PARTNERS & VOLUNTEERS!

Our Sustaining Partners



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