

WASHINGTON STEM

POSITION: EVALUATION SPECIALIST

REPORTING TO: CHIEF PROGRAM OFFICER

COMPENSATION: VERY COMPETITIVE SALARY & BENEFIT PACKAGE.
NEGOTIABLE DEPENDING ON EXPERIENCE

OPERATING BUDGET: \$5.4 MILLION (PROJECTED 2011), TO \$10 MILLION ANNUALLY

PROJECTED FUNDING: \$100 MILLION OVER 10-YEARS

Washington STEM is a newly formed nonprofit organization that works to catalyze innovation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) teaching and learning in Washington State. Washington STEM advocates for and impacts policies and practices that will rapidly scale STEM education innovation, support educators in preparing students throughout Washington State for success in postsecondary education and work opportunities, particularly those students who have historically been underserved.

THE ORGANIZATION

Washington STEM is a newly formed 501C-3 led by a Board of Directors and a CEO. The current 7-member Board represents many of Washington State's most influential corporate, educational, civic and philanthropic organizations. Advisors and supporters of the design and launch of Washington STEM include leadership representatives from McKinstry Company, Microsoft, The Boeing Company, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Washington Roundtable and The Seattle Foundation. This committed, collaborative effort will integrate the best private sector knowledge on encouraging and scaling promising innovations, the education sector's focus on supporting effective teaching, and the public sector's commitment to high quality, public education systems.

Working in partnerships with community organizations, Washington STEM will strive to ensure students are ready for college and careers – particularly students who have historically been underserved.

The federal administration is making improving educational outcomes a top priority, with an unparalleled focus on the importance of STEM education for all students nationally. Now is the ideal time for action in Washington State. Consider these current State STEM statistics:



- Washington State is one of less than 10 states in which the achievement gaps in math and science are large and still growing.
- Nearly 50% of our community college students require remediation, mostly in math, and the number rises to nearly 70% for students of color.
- Washington ranks fourth in the country for technology based corporations but 46th in participation in science and engineering graduate programs.
- Students of color earn less than 5% of postsecondary degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Washington STEM is guided by the belief that to succeed in the 21st century knowledge economy, Washington students need the ability to create, design, innovate, and think critically to solve complex challenges. Students need deep knowledge and strong skills in science, technology, engineering and math – and they need to be excited and ready to use that knowledge in the real world. It is clear that STEM knowledge and skills are central to responsible citizenship, rewarding employment and ultimately to improved social, economic, and environmental conditions of our local and global community.

Washington STEM has identified the challenges in achieving these goals beginning at the P/K-12 level. Since Washington adopted standards-based reforms and accountability in the mid-1990s, the significant gains in reading and writing have not been matched by similar improvements in math and science achievement. Even more affected by the STEM achievement gap are low-income, African American, Hispanic and Native American students. Being well prepared in STEM education is essential for all of our students. Every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, income or gender, is capable of being proficient in STEM and our schools, in strengthened partnerships with the community must ensure students reach their full potential.

Civic, business, and education leaders are well positioned to have a positive impact on all students by embracing STEM literacy as a central component of a comprehensive career and college ready plan. Washington STEM has an extensive and systematic approach to supporting dramatic improvements in student STEM outcomes. That agenda will work toward achieving three key outcomes for students regardless of race, ethnicity, income or gender:

- All students develop a core foundation within and across the STEM disciplines so that they can be active and engaged in a society that is scientifically and technologically rich, complex, and dynamic.
- All students develop a strong conceptual and factual knowledge within and across the STEM disciplines to prepare them for postsecondary education pathways that will lead to rewarding family-wage earning careers with options for growth and mobility.
- An increasing number and diverse group of students are motivated and encouraged to pursue STEM professions through rich, robust, and relevant learning experiences throughout their P/K-12 experience.



The future of our youth and the economic prosperity of Washington State depend on the degree to which we can dramatically increase the educational opportunities our students receive, both inside and outside of the classroom, ensuring every student succeeds in school, work, and life. Washington STEM aims to mobilize education, business, and civic leaders to fulfill their shared responsibility to accelerate improvements in STEM instruction throughout the state and dramatically improve learning outcomes for all students.

Washington STEM has a start-up culture. Based at the McKinstry Innovation Center in Seattle, Washington STEM is a place of action, seeking to amplify and accelerate results in STEM learning across the state.



THE POSITION

Reporting to the Chief Program Officer, the Evaluation Specialist will be a key member of the start-up team. As chief architect of data collection, research methodology, evaluation design and analysis, the Evaluation Specialist will play a pivotal role in the knowledge generation, dissemination and utilization that is central to Washington STEM's mission.

The evaluation design for Washington STEM will amass insights from practitioners, lessons learned, and evidence of impact that will feed into the knowledge management system to inform the field, while at the same time inform internal grant-making processes and priorities. Products, tools or resources generated by grantees will also be documented and shared. A state-of-the-art internet portal will allow information to be quickly and easily accessed and social networking functions will encourage and promote dialogue and discussion. Convening, publications and community engagement will expand access to information for key constituents.

The core evaluation strategy is in place conceptually as part of the newly adopted five-year strategic plan for Washington STEM. The Evaluation Specialist will determine how to operationalize this strategy, developing the suite of methods and tools designed to generate findings that will promote STEM teaching and learning to schools, communities and policy leaders. S/he will be the strategic conscience of the data-driven aspects of Washington STEM, ensuring that data collection is carried out with quality and integrity and according to federal human subject regulations, making decisions about what kind of evidence is required and what indicators need to be tracked, identifying mid-course adjustments or modifications as needed.

Working with the Chief Program Officer, the Evaluation Specialist will help develop Requests for Proposals (RFP's) for external evaluation contracts, review proposals and monitor resulting contracts. The Evaluation Specialist will interface with the external contractors to design and plan qualitative and quantitative evaluation strategies, including surveys, observations, interviews and focus groups. S/he will collaborate with the Technology Product Manager on staff at Washington STEM to create technology-driven data systems to collect, display, and analyze multiple sources of meaningful student, teacher and leader data.



The Evaluation Specialist is instrumental to making informed, strategic grant decisions. S/he will design the research and evaluation sections of RFP's for micro, portfolio and major grant investments. Working with the Program Officer, s/he will also analyze the evaluation sections of submitted proposals. Once grants are awarded, the Evaluation Specialist will monitor data collection and mine the data in different ways to gain the most learning.

There will be some travel involved, primarily to coordinate field-based (district and/or school level) data collection activities, such as site visits, interviews, structured observations, focus groups or collection of documents. The Evaluation Specialist will be responsible for coding data, using appropriate analysis tools and will play a shared role in analysis using descriptive and inferential statistics. S/he will consolidate, and summarize results, then identify the implications of the results for future programs.

The collection, analysis and interpreted findings of the data will serve as the factual evidence and catalyst for change for Washington STEM. Therefore, the distillation and presentation of results in the form of documents, reports, briefs, charts and graphs is a critical component of this role. The Evaluation Specialist must prepare findings and related recommendations for multiple, key targeted audiences in understandable and actionable language.

ISSUES & PRIORITIES

- One of the early priorities for the Evaluation Specialist will be to help identify our external evaluation partners. As the key interface with them, the Evaluation Specialist will work closely on developing protocols, agreeing methodology and amassing the tools needed to support the core evaluation strategy. The Evaluation Specialist will need to ensure that the evaluation plan is being implemented on a month-to-month basis and ensure that databases are well managed and can be called upon at any time.
- The Evaluation Specialist will need to take the conceptual strategy and translate it into real terms, establishing indicators to track the progress of grantees as well as Washington STEM as a catalyst for change. The design, development and implementation of the evaluation plan represents 10% of the overall grant expense budget. The Evaluation Specialist must ensure that knowledge generated from the portfolio of investments from Washington STEM, as well as others in the state and national arena, are easily understandable and accessible to a broad audience.
- There will be vast quantities of data to manage. The Evaluation Specialist needs to be able to take that in stride and be very strategic; not only about what data is needed and how to organize and manage the information but also about making the data accessible to all audiences. There is a need to be mindful about what evidence speaks to each audience in order to engage them and encourage them to access and use key resources.
- While setting tight standards and protocols for retrieving, tracking, monitoring and analyzing data is central to this role, the Evaluation Specialist needs to vigilantly avoid getting caught up in process. Keeping the mission in mind, particularly the goal of creating positive change through access and application of knowledge, the Evaluation Specialist needs to continually seek new methodologies, question how we look at data and what data is needed.
- As one of the pioneers of Washington STEM, the Evaluation Specialist will need to work closely and collaboratively with other start-up staff members to support and effectively launch Washington STEM initiatives in a fast-paced, ever changing environment.



IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

We seek an innovative, proactive professional with an entrepreneurial spirit who is motivated to build a cornerstone program for Washington STEM. The ideal candidate will display true passion for the ambitious goals of the organization. The opportunity to play a pivotal role in providing the evidence for STEM education reform, to be instrumental to the evaluation strategy and implementation inspires you. You see the need to establish infrastructure and process as a welcome challenge.

Your curiosity and drive for social justice in education makes you a tireless advocate for new evaluation methods that will make a difference and ensure instructional effectiveness. You are comfortable in an organization experiencing significant building and growth, and can work autonomously as well as contribute and support the rest of the team.

Solid experience in evaluation methodology, technical expertise in evaluation design and data analysis is important; mastery of research design, applied research methods and experience conducting qualitative and quantitative research is expected. You have the interpersonal skills to instill trust in contractors and sources so they understand you are collecting data to learn and not to judge them. You have sound judgment and well honed critical thinking skills to ask the right questions, filter what is important, determine what data needs to be collected and what the results mean to various audiences.

You are able to organize and synthesize large amounts of information and importantly, translate it into clear and persuasive presentations for a wide range of audiences to ensure a consistent and fully engaged approach to knowledge generation, dissemination and utilization. You have an understanding of issues in P/K-12 education and the ability to address the concerns of a variety of stakeholders and audiences.

Project management skills are highly desirable since you will be managing contractors, large amounts of data from several sources, and the needs of technical and non-technical audiences. There will be multiple tasks and priorities simultaneously so the ability to prioritize is an important asset.

Background may include experience as a classroom teacher and/or researcher, a recent graduate student, or a research and evaluation role in an informal education institution, state-based organization or larger school district.

A flexible, nimble and collaborative style is critical to success in this position; the culture of Washington STEM is highly action and results oriented. You thrive in an intense, fast-paced, start-up environment and work well within a cross functional team.



MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

We seek candidates with 3-5 years of experience conducting applied research in education or social science. Expertise in data design and analysis and knowledge of analytical software is essential (e.g. SPSS, SASS, N6, ATLAS TI). Proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite products is desirable.

Excellent written communications skills are of paramount importance, with particular strength in presenting complex, technical information in a clear and concise manner, both verbally and in written form, and adapting it to various audiences.

A solid understanding of P/K-12 systems, policies, education research and current educational trends, particularly in STEM education is advantageous.

An advanced degree in educational research, statistical analysis, or quantitative social sciences (e.g. psychology, public policy, sociology) or comparable work experience is strongly preferred. A Bachelor's degree is required.



TO APPLY

Washington STEM is an equal opportunity employer and all qualified candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Please address a cover letter and resume to Melissa Merritt at info@waldronhr.com.



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