WASHINGTON STEM CENTER
Chief Executive Officer

Position Description

THE SEARCH

The first Chief Executive Officer of the Washington STEM Center will lead and formally launch an organization designed to become a powerful advocate for improving student achievement and opportunity in areas critical to the state's economic prosperity: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The Center aims to catalyze innovation in the state's K-12 education system, increase teacher effectiveness and student learning, and dramatically raise the number of Washington students graduating ready for college and work and succeeding in STEM degree programs. These efforts are intended to benefit every student in the state, with a particular emphasis on accelerating the achievement of low-income and minority students.

A formidable array of leaders reflecting many of the State's most influential corporate, educational, and philanthropic organizations have formed a planning and steering committee which has laid the foundation for the Center. Specifically, a small but dedicated group of professionals interested in transforming math and science education and representing *Microsoft, The Boeing Company, Battelle, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Washington Roundtable, and Partnership For Learning* have been meeting weekly since the Summer of 2008 to help guide the Center's early stage planning. This unprecedented coalition across industries, representing multi-million dollar investments annually, is committed to focusing the collective resources – both human and financial – of its members toward supporting this comprehensive, statewide initiative.

With this in mind, the steering committee seeks a transformational and experienced leader who will take the reins and implement the next exciting phase of the Center's evolution – one in which s/he will leverage the initial funding and groundbreaking foundation laid by the coalition of founding organizations and build a Center poised to accomplish complex but critical goals toward dramatically altering the STEM landscape in Washington.

For more detailed information on the vision and work accomplished by the steering committee, please visit http://www.partnership4learning.org/stem and click on the link for "concept paper."

THE OPPORTUNITY

To succeed in the 21st-century knowledge economy, Washington students need the ability to create, design, innovate, and think critically to solve complex challenges. Every young person should possess deep knowledge and strong skills in math, science, technology and engineering — and be excited and ready to use that knowledge in the real world.

Washington is not, however, currently prepared to offer students the opportunities they deserve. Washington ranks fourth in the country in technology-based corporations, but 46th in participation in science and engineering graduate degree programs. As a result, too many young people do not have the skills required to fill the family wage jobs available in Washington. The challenges begin at the K–12 level. While significant gains have been made in reading and writing since Washington adopted

standards-based reforms and accountability in the mid-1990s, these have not been matched by similar improvements in math and science achievement. For example, only 44 percent of Washington's 4th graders and 36 percent of 8th graders scored proficient or above in math on the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress, and only 29 and 33 percent, respectively, scored that well in science. Average scores are much lower for low-income, African American, Hispanic, and Native American students. Approximately 50 percent of community and technical college students must take remedial courses and less than 5 percent of STEM postsecondary degrees awarded in the state are earned by students of color.

The imaginations of young people, educators and the public must be ignited in order to achieve dramatic improvements. To meet this challenge, the Washington Roundtable and Partnership for Learning are launching a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Initiative to accelerate improvements in the state's K–12 education system, transform the teaching profession, and dramatically increase the number of Washington high school students who graduate ready to succeed in STEM postsecondary degree programs and careers. A strong STEM Center would, ideally, serve as a hub of sorts; a focal point of leadership in state-level policymaking, advocating for effective curriculum, materials, and resources, to assure that all students across the state benefit from high-quality STEM educational experiences.

THE STEM CENTER

The new, independent, nonprofit STEM Center, managed by a world-class staff with expertise in policy, programs, and communications, will open in the spring of 2010. The STEM Center will offer leadership in the following areas in order to accelerate improvements in STEM instruction throughout the state:

Investor: Identify, evaluate and leverage existing resources so that they have a greater impact; secure and target resources to disseminate effective models to benefit and serve all students, as well as to generate knowledge where innovation is needed to drive transformative change.

Partnership-builder: Create and support an expanding statewide STEM network of practitioners, policymakers, and researchers with a shared vision and commitment to dramatically improve STEM instruction at scale.

Coordinator: Ensure that the work of the STEM Center is focused on strategic priorities that align with evidence of best practice generated at the state and national level.

Evaluator: Assess the quality and impact of various programs, policies, and interventions to support a learning network that uses evidence to guide its actions and communications.

Communicator: Create and use a state-of-the-art information network to proactively facilitate knowledge sharing among schools, districts, policymakers, and researchers, as well as serve as a conduit to disseminate best practices from the national arena.

Champion: Advocate for improved policies and practices at the state and national level, especially those that will improve the achievement of groups historically underrepresented in STEM.

With leadership from the STEM Center, four key strategies will create a dynamic network able to effectively implement programs and practices in the field, supported by a robust policy agenda and communications strategy to drive significant and lasting changes in the education system.

Strategy 1: ***Identify, support, coordinate, share quality resources***
The STEM Center will support and coordinate state, regional, and local STEM teaching programs, practices and policies. By identifying and sharing proven existing practices identified at the district, state or national level, the STEM Center will be able to effectively disseminate what is known about effective instruction. By helping to coordinate and focus existing resources as well as generate new and private funds, the STEM Center will be able to both "expand the pie" and ensure funds are spent on high-impact work, as well as target high-priority areas for new investments to spur innovation. By fostering a cycle of continuous improvement and rigorously measuring outcomes, the STEM Center will serve as a quality control clearinghouse of effective innovations and will help create and sustain a culture of evidence.

Strategy 2: ***Learn from the field***
The key to strengthening instruction and accelerating student achievement in STEM fields at scale is to improve practices for recruiting, preparing, hiring, retaining, supporting, and evaluating higher-quality teachers. By focusing the expertise and resources of business, industry, K–12 schools and districts, and colleges and universities, the STEM Center will create an environment for continuous learning. Schools and districts will learn from each other as well as from state and national organizations whose expertise will address targeted priorities.

Strategy 3: ***Inform policy and practice***
The STEM Center will actively engage in local, state, and national initiatives to gather information on successful interventions and use the information to promote public policies and evidence-based practices that advance teacher effectiveness in the STEM fields. Priorities include:

- Stronger statewide standards, assessments, graduation requirements, and linked longitudinal data systems;
- Improved curriculum tools that make the standards actionable for teachers and students;
- Better diagnostic assessments that teachers can use to strengthen instruction; and
- Professional development and certification models that prepare teachers to engage students and families in rigorous and relevant learning that connect school, careers, and life.

Strategy 4: ***Create public demand for quality***
By advocating for students who need the most assistance, the STEM Center will ensure that all students have the opportunity to compete for STEM jobs of the future. It will develop and implement a coordinated statewide communications plan that will build public understanding and demand for higher-quality STEM education for all students. Families and communities will expect excellent STEM instruction and student outcomes in every Washington school. Expect more, get more.

A STATE-WIDE STEM NETWORK

To develop and implement these strategies, the STEM Center will create and support a statewide network of K-12 districts and schools, institutions of higher education, and business and community partners with a common focus: to dramatically scale up the development and dissemination of best practices in STEM instruction to benefit all students.

The network will focus on three priority areas:

- improving the quality of instruction in STEM disciplines provided to all students to ensure success in post-secondary education or workforce, without need for remediation;
- forging strong connections to business, industry, and higher education to provide students opportunities to learn from STEM professionals in classroom settings and in the workplace that incorporate real-world STEM methods, tools, and technologies;
- creating pathways that maximize opportunities for students from underrepresented minority groups to succeed in STEM education and careers, including STEM teaching.

At the heart of the network, the STEM Center will provide direct support to all schools, districts, and institutions of higher education by serving as a clearinghouse and broker of information on evidence-based practices, programs, and polices to support STEM teaching and learning. As a grant-making organization, the STEM Center will fund Technical Assistance Partners and Learning Coalitions to support implementation efforts across the state.

THE CEO POSITION

This is an outstanding opportunity to play an integral role in public education reform in the State of Washington as well as nationally. The successful candidate will be:

- an adept architect who can build upon the promising foundation s/he will inherit and operationalize an impactful, high-functioning statewide vehicle for change;
- a change agent who is energized by the idea of pushing STEM in Washington well outside of the traditional boundaries of schools and school systems;
- a bridge-builder who can easily access the overlapping but disjointed network of K-20 science, technology, engineering, math communities, establish credibility, and motivate them to organize effectively;
- a connector who will build new, effective, and nontraditional partnerships that aim to improve student learning and interest in STEM, and *perhaps most importantly,*
- a visionary leader who can inspire and persuade Washington's citizenry and elected leadership to act.

REQUISITE QUALIFICATIONS

First and foremost, the CEO must believe in the importance of quality STEM education—not just as a lever to increase the work-force pipeline into STEM related fields, but as a critical factor in ensuring that all students are empowered with the skills necessary to succeed in college, work, or life.

Additionally, candidates for the position *must* bring **experience** in the following areas:

- A professional background comprised of credentials and experiences that will validate their stated understanding of STEM education;
- National relationships with key stakeholders in Washington DC (e.g. the National Science Foundation) and elsewhere;
- Strategic and tactical planning experience on behalf of an organization or major division;
- Proven and significant team-management and team-building experience at a senior level, including the management of external consultants;
- Extensive legislative, communications and/or advocacy experience with complex public policy issues in a political environment;
- Experience in an organization or initiative which must influence its constituents in the absence of any formal authority over them; and
- Experience working directly with a high-level Board of Directors (or comparable supervisory entity).

Next, candidates for the position *must* have the following **skills**:

- Ability to assume ultimate oversight and responsibility for the organization's efficient management, staff and infrastructure, and a projected operating budget over the next three years of up to $50M;
- Superb interpersonal skills, including the ability to convey ideas and positions to numerous audiences, including elected officials, corporate boards, district leaders, funders, principals, community groups, teachers, students, and parents;
- Ability to build and maintain partnerships and coalitions, both formal and informal, with other individuals and organizations in the STEM community;
- Capacity to identify new sources of funding from foundations, corporations, investors, and/or individual donors and the skills required to secure these resources through relationship-building and ultimate oversight of a robust fundraising program;
- Political savvy and instincts sharp enough to navigate the complexity of national and Washington state STEM communities and political landscapes;
- Aptitude for identifying, evaluating, and investing in effective and innovative STEM education models; and
- A track record of attracting, recruiting, retaining, and developing excellent staff.

Finally, candidates for the position *must* possess the following **personal characteristics**:

- The sophistication required to be the public face of the STEM Center, and the eloquence and persuasiveness, both oral and written, required to serve as a spokesperson for STEM education to a wide variety of audiences;
- The executive presence to inspire confidence and passion both internally and externally, and the determination and enthusiasm to lead an entrepreneurial, mission-driven organization;
- A demonstrated commitment to working with people of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives; and
- A level of integrity and energy compelling enough to bring divergent groups together in a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect, inspiring them to act.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The CEO will report to a governing Board comprised of state and national chief executive officers, foundation leaders, civic leaders and K-12 and higher education executives. Initially reporting to the CEO (though not yet hired) will be a Chief Programs Officer, 2 field-based Program Directors, a Chief Information Officer, a Communications Director, a Policy Director, and two administrative support staff. The board is projecting that the Center's staff will grow to approximately 14 over the course of its first three years. Additionally, the Center will have relationships with local, state and national consultants in such fields as STEM education, development, communications and advocacy.

COMPENSATION

Highly competitive salary and benefits package, including relocation expenses.

IDEAL START DATE

Spring 2010

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. For best consideration, applications should be submitted *electronically* prior to **Friday, January 29th, 2010.** Applications should include a letter of interest and a current resume. **Nominations**, **applications**, or **inquiries** about the position and/or the search process should be directed to: **Monisha Lozier, President & Founder, Cobbe Place Consulting, *via* *traci@cobbeplaceconsulting.com*.**

The STEM Center seeks and welcomes a diverse pool of candidates in this search.