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OSIT Receives \$150,000 Grant for K-5 STEM Education Initiatives

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The Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT) announced that it has partnered with the William N. Pennington Foundation to increase access to quality STEM programs in elementary schools in order to better prepare students for a career pathway to success in the New Nevada.

"High-quality STEM education prepares students for in-demand, high-paying careers, but it also prepares them for life. Skills like critical thinking, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving are important no matter your endeavor. I want to thank the Pennington Foundation for their generous support of STEM education in Nevada," said **Brian Mitchell, Director of OSIT**.

Research has found that one-third of boys and girls lose interest in science by the fourth grade and that a child's interest in STEM is largely formed by the time she or he reaches upper elementary and early middle school. The same research also finds that early exposure to STEM, especially for girls, makes children more likely to succeed in science and pursue STEM fields in college. Yet, just 38% of Nevada's elementary schools in Nevada reported offering STEM during the school day in a survey conducted by OSIT last year.

Funding from the Foundation will be used to create two new grant programs at OSIT that meet the needs of elementary educators. First, OSIT will establish a micro-grant program to elementary educators for the purchase of small lab equipment for innovative and creative STEM projects that align with classroom instruction and increase students' exposure to and interest in STEM. Second, OSIT will establish a larger grant program that funds high-quality, evidence-based STEM curriculum and professional development programs found on the STEM Advisory Council's list of recommended STEM programs. More information about the grants is forthcoming and will be found at www.osit.nv.gov.

These new grant programs align with three key strategies identified in the [State STEM Strategic Plan](#). First, the State should increase the use of hands-on, evidence-based, experiential STEM learning in grades K-5. Second, the State should increase the percentage of elementary schools that teach science three-plus hours per week. Third, the State should increase interest in, awareness of, and achievement in the STEM subjects in grades K-5, particularly amongst demographic groups that are traditionally underrepresented in STEM.

About OSIT- The mission of OSIT is to coordinate, support, and align efforts by K-12 and higher education, workforce development and employers to improve science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and STEM workforce development so that Nevada's workforce can meet the demands of its growing economy.

About the Pennington Foundation - The William N. Pennington Foundation was formed by the late William N. Pennington, a gaming industry pioneer and philanthropist, and provides grants to Northern Nevada based organizations in the areas of education, community services, health care, and medical research. The foundation also supports the community and health services for children and the elderly, as well as providing financial aid to students in colleges and universities.