



CONNECTION  
COLLABORATION  
COMMUNICATION  
ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2022

OMAHA  
STEM  
ECOSYSTEM



## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Connecting education and business development to fuel tomorrow's workforce continues to guide the Omaha STEM Ecosystem as we introduce new community partners to our vision of transforming Omaha into a robust center of STEM excellence and workforce innovation. We are pleased to report that we have made great strides in this area in 2022, resulting in the Omaha STEM Ecosystem recently being honored as the Community Builder of the Year, an achievement awarded by the AIM Institute at its annual AIM Tech Awards. We are so proud to receive this recognition as it supports our efforts to build a vibrant STEM community that connects today's youth with the careers of tomorrow.

Research has shown that a spark of innovation is the key indicator that ignites a student's interest in pursuing a STEM-centered career. Our challenge is ensuring that spark stays lit until they enter the workforce. To address this challenge, we continue enhancing the STEM Community Platform, a website created to expand STEM content and resources that are critical to building a digital-literate future workforce.

We also are proud to have built a network of more than 900 community partners across

education, business, nonprofit and government sectors. By leveraging their social capital, we have increased the number of cross-sector collaborations that connect education to workforce development. Looking ahead, we'll continue to expand our partnerships where the need is the greatest. Our STEM Connect events continue to bring partners together to discuss key issues of importance, such as understanding and communicating the meaning of STEM; being purposeful in how we deliver STEM education; linking critical skills to careers; and having business partners work hand-in-hand with educators.

Thank you for your support! We could not have accomplished all that we set out to do in 2022 without the engagement from our partners. We continue to welcome any offering of your time, talent and treasure in support of the STEM Ecosystem. Ways to be involved include participating in events, joining a committee, promoting resources on social media and reaching out to your professional connections. We sincerely appreciate any collaboration you could offer to help us ensure our STEM community remains vibrant.

Thank you,

**Julie Sigmon / Director**

### Mission

Building a stronger STEM community by connecting education and business development for tomorrow's workforce.

### Vision

Transforming Omaha into a robust center of STEM excellence and innovation.

# IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

- Less than 46% of Nebraska’s 4<sup>th</sup> grade students are proficient in math. By 8<sup>th</sup> grade, proficiency drops to less than 38% according to the Department of Education.
- Similar is true in science, with proficiency less than 47% among 4<sup>th</sup> grade students and less than 41% among 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- The demand for STEM talent in Omaha has increased 31% over the past 10 years, and that trend is continuing.

## Solution

We are connecting STEM programs to facilitate efficient and effective career pathways through the STEM Community Platform to grow the number of local STEM professionals and create balance between industry demand and available talent. Research has shown that the key influencer for students is often an engagement experience that sparks innovation. The STEM Community Platform supports that journey. This report shows our journey and commitment to assure Omaha remains a vibrant community.



## What is STEM?

STEM is science, technology, engineering and mathematics. At its fundamental core, STEM is exploration and critical thinking for solving solutions.

# 2022

**THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE ACTION** is derived from the use of focused communications, connection and collaboration.

## CONNECTIVITY THROUGH NUMBERS

**17%** of formal collaborations have increased compared to 5 years ago

**18%** of cross-sector formal collaborations increased compared to 5 years ago

**919** community partners have connected with the Omaha STEM Ecosystem this year

**200** community members have attended our STEM Connect events this year

**5,000** community members have interacted with our email campaigns

**363** new followers have been added across our 3 social media pages

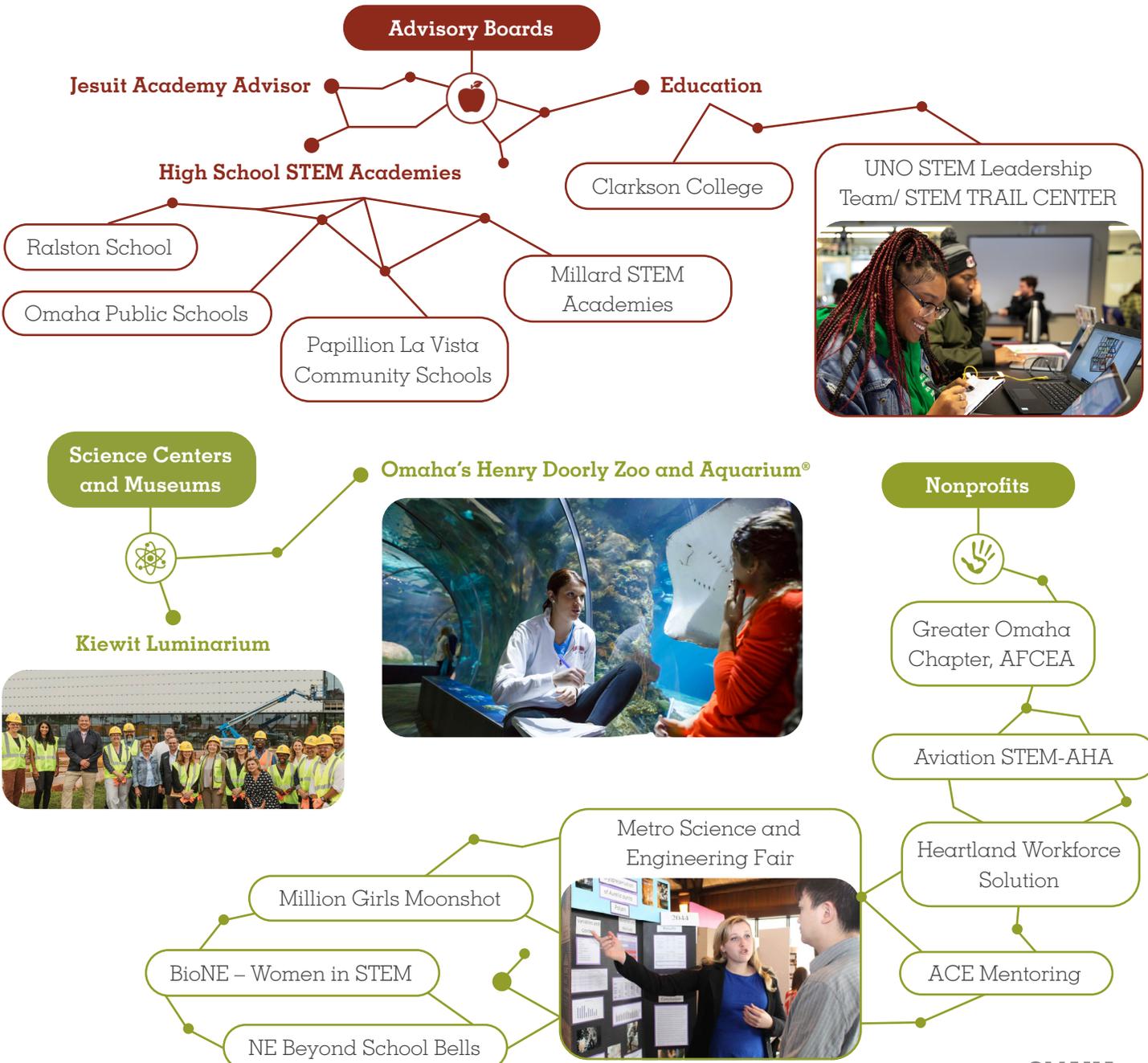
**8** college students were engaged in career development

**2** college students supported the OSE communication plan

**7,900** users to the STEM Community Platform in 2022

# CONNECTIVITY TO STEM OPPORTUNITIES

The OSE leverages the social capital of each partner to address the STEM workforce gap by connecting education to workforce development.



## COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Outreach to our community partners involves unique collaborations that are all valuable in assuring our STEM community remains vibrant.



University of Nebraska at Omaha and National Science Foundation Grants



Awarded Friend of Science from the Nebraska Academy of Science

The Virtual Metropolitan Science and Engineering Fair



STEM Community Platform collaborations with Cox Business and Meta/Facebook

Active learning Space Design events with Sheppard's Business Interiors, Inc.



Annual City Nature Challenge

Nonprofit Tech Donation Drive with Share Omaha, Goodwill Omaha and ICAN.



Aldrin Family Foundation Event



## STEM COMMUNITY PLATFORM

Launched in April 2021, the STEM Community Platform (SCP) is an online clearinghouse of information about program offerings, career information, and resources. This platform has allowed community partners to come together to ensure access and equity in education for all students. Thank you to all of the sponsors that make this platform possible. Visit the platform at <https://stemplatform.aiminstitute.org/>



### 2022 Updates

The OSE in partnership with the AIM Institute have been working hard this year to continuously update the SCP. As this is a community resource, we want to make sure we are producing a tool that exceeds the needs of the community. In 2022, enhancements made to the SCP included over 500 new careers added to the “Explore STEM Careers” pages; more descriptive filters for the Offerings page; and over 400 programs posted to the SCP.



### Visions for 2023

Our goal moving forward with the SCP is to be THE interactive tool for the community to provide equity in access to STEM resources in the Greater Omaha area. In the next 12-18 months we are adding the following features:

- 4,000 careers to the “Learn About STEM Careers” page
- Resource page that includes academies, scholarships, and research information
- Target marketing including descriptive analytics
- A real time chat box connecting education, business, and industry



## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Omaha STEM Ecosystem Community Connect: STEM Happy Hour *April 5th, 2022*

There were 65 attendees spanning all sectors, including business, education, nonprofit, government and community organizations. This event focused on creating connections, communication and collaboration to build engagement in our STEM community. Tony Veland of AIM Institute and Jim Collison of Gallup highlighted the STEM Community Platform and how it serves as a critical piece in leveraging business and education expertise to close the talent gap.



### Omaha STEM Connect: Building a Successful STEM Career Pipeline *October 25th, 2022*

We had 57 attendees at our Omaha STEM Connect event, hosted in partnership with the AIM Institute, for business leaders to learn how to engage with STEM Community Platform and impact change in the region's career pipeline. Thank you to all of the speakers who shared with us how they are helping to fuel brighter futures in STEM. The event resulted in great conversations about how we can move the STEM Community Platform forward.

## COMMUNICATING OSE MISSION

The strength and success of the Omaha STEM Ecosystem requires a clear and concise message that guides stakeholders to become engaged in building a thriving STEM community.

- Monthly OSE Newsletters connected us with our members and community
- Monthly STEM programs were shared in Omaha Public Schools' newsletter
- Worked with Jacht at University of Nebraska Lincoln to create a video highlighting OSE's mission



### Presentations

- Omaha Kiwanis
- ICAN Women's Leadership Conference
- Heartland Developers Conference
- OPS Curriculum Day
- State of Education Presentation in Lincoln
- Millard Business Association
- Council Bluffs Business Association
- Nonprofit Summit of the Midlands
- Nebraska Association of School Boards

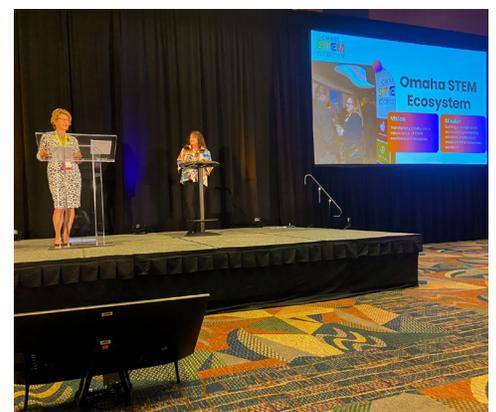


### Media Reach

Expanded communication to elevate collaboration through a news media presence. News coverage on our efforts resulted in **59 earned media placements**, reaching an estimated audience of **20 million**. Omaha media coverage of our fall STEM Connect was shared across **several states**. The estimated publicity value of these placements was **\$2.2 million**.

### Media

- Midlands Business Journal articles
- KIOS radio interviews with Mike Hogan
- KPTM (FOX) story on STEM program opportunities.
- WOWT (NBC) and KETV (ABC) coverage of the fall STEM Connect Event. The WOWT coverage was shared on several NBC station affiliates across the United States.



## STUDENT VOICES

Working with students is a foundational value of the OSE in helping to connect career exploration opportunities. This is reflective in:

- Collaboration with UNO STEM Stars
- Internships in communication and marketing
- MSEF participation
- Worked with Jacht, a student run full-service advertising agency at University of Nebraska Lincoln, to create a video highlighting OSE's mission



“ The Omaha STEM Ecosystem (OSE) strives to include everyone in STEM education and wants to tell everyone's experiences. It is built by truly passionate and driven people who recognize the requirements that need to be met to connect, collaborate, and communicate with diverse industries and people. I think that it is such an important part of developing an ecosystem in Nebraska. I am honored to have been a contributor to the OSE and am excited to see how much it will grow. ”

- Zoey Huckins, OSE Intern

“ I am a senior at UNL majoring in advertising and public relations. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to support OSE's social media platforms during my time as a social media intern. I was given the creative freedom to write posts and create pictures that aligned with OSE's mission to build a robust STEM community in Omaha for everyone. Overall, it was a wonderful chance to gain exposure of working in a non-profit work environment and I would highly recommend to anyone who is interested, even if you don't know much about STEM. ”

- Rachel Haufler, OSE Intern University of Nebraska Lincoln



# FOUNDERS

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The Omaha STEM Ecosystem believes in the power of connections, collaborations and communication to address the critical shortfall of STEM professionals in the Greater Omaha area. We could not do what we do without you and our work depends on your support.

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium

Clarkson College

University of Nebraska at Omaha STEM TRAIL Center

AIM Institute

University of Nebraska Medical Center

Union Pacific Railroad

University of Nebraska College of Engineering

Nebel Family

Metropolitan Community College

CyncHealth

Omaha Public Power District

Cox Business

DLR Group

Anne Hubbard Foundation

Peter Kiewit Foundation

Parker Family Foundation

# CHAMPIONS

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The Omaha STEM Ecosystem believes in the power of connections, collaborations and communication to address the critical shortfall of STEM professionals in the Greater Omaha area. We could not do what we do without you and our work depends on your support.

Omaha Public Schools

Facebook

BVH Architecture

LinkedIn

Sheppard's Business Interiors

Lukas Partners

John Day Company

Heartland Workforce Solutions

NE Department of Labor/Economics

Olsson

Prairie STEM

NE for Lifesaving Cures

Ralston Public Schools

City of Omaha

Gallup

JE Dunn Construction

MMC Contractors

Mammel Family Foundation

**We invite you to get involved in the Omaha STEM Ecosystem  
by contributing your time, talent and treasure.**

To learn more about ways to get involved or support the Omaha STEM Ecosystem, please contact Julie Sigmon.

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