



CAREER CONNECT NW

Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom counties

Hosted at  **Northwest Educational Service District 189**

Together We Can



Catalyst.



Connections.



Careers.



Sinead Fitzpatrick Plagge (Career Connect NW) and Michelle Heitman (Skagit Valley College) lead a discussion with CTE Directors and additional college partners at a CTE Dual Credit Process meeting in December.

Exciting progress in CTE Dual Credit

The *2024 CTE Dual Credit Legislative Report*, submitted by the State Board of Community and Technical College, highlights a transformative year for Career and Technical Education (CTE) in the Northwest region.

Thanks to the ESSB-5187 proviso funding, Career Connect NW alongside college and school district partners have made strides in expanding equitable access to dual credit opportunities that prepare students for high-demand careers. Read the full report [here](#).

Key year-one successes:

- Developed a shared vision to align CTE pathways with workforce needs.
- Standardized articulation practices across regions.
- Launched a Community of Practice for computer science educators, fostering collaboration and expanding opportunities for students.

The report emphasizes the importance of scaling efforts to address challenges like credit transcription and institutional policy alignment. Year two priorities include expanding pathways in computer science and manufacturing, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and piloting innovative tools to streamline processes.

Thank you to partners Bellingham Technical College, Everett Community College, Skagit Valley College, and Whatcom Community College, who have been close collaborators and contributors to the pilot. School district representation from Bellingham, Everett, Ferndale, Lakewood, Mount Vernon, Mukilteo, Monroe, and Stanwood along with the Northwest Career & Technical Skills Center and Sno-Isle Skills Center have provided invaluable input and feedback as we all work across systems to better align processes and increase student access.

Read more [here](#).



About Us

The Career Connect NW Network connects industry, education, and community partners to collectively meet the career development needs of Northwest Washington's youth in an equitable and accessible way.

Our Network creates a coordinated effort with planning partners and local stakeholder organizations in Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom communities to serve as a catalyst for initiatives, leveraging resources and programs and building community.

The Career Connect NW Network has three goals:

- Catalyze Regional Stakeholder Partnerships, Collaborations, and Strategies
- Increase Equity and Access to High Wage/High Demand Career Opportunities
- Support Coherent Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness

We are dedicated to equity through attention to data and focus on those historically underrepresented in STEM fields, including students of color,

Join us for Year 2 of the Information Technology/Computer Science Community of Practice

Career Connect NW is thrilled to kick off the next series of our Information Technology/Computer Science Community of Practice on Feb. 6, at Skagit Valley College, followed by events on March 12 at Edmonds College and May 14 at Whatcom Community College.

This year, we're excited to welcome three new colleges - Edmonds College, Whatcom Community College, and Bellingham Technical College - into our growing learning community, joining forces with Everett Community College and Skagit Valley College. These collaborations will enhance our discussions as we work together to strengthen pathways from high school to post-secondary education and beyond.

Year 2 Goals & Focus Areas

1. Coherence in Curriculum and Standards
 - Build a shared understanding of essential IT and computer science competencies across high school and college programs.
 - Identify curriculum gaps and overlaps to ensure smooth transitions.
 - Expand dual credit opportunities through course mapping.
2. Exploring Current and Emerging Industry Trends
 - Stay updated on technologies like AI, programming, cybersecurity, cloud computing, and data science.
 - Incorporate teacher feedback to align curriculum with industry advancements.
 - Explore CS/IT labor market insights and emerging trends.
3. Aligning Curriculum with Industry Needs
 - Ensure certifications (e.g., CompTIA, AWS, Google) match regional job demands.
 - Collaborate with industry partners to address emerging skill requirements.
 - Hear directly from employers to strengthen partnerships.

Register for events below:

Session 1:

Date: Feb. 6

Time: 4 – 6 p.m.

Location: Skagit Valley College, Cardinal Center (Multipurpose Room)

Dinner and clock hours provided!

Register [here](#)

Session 2:

Date: March 19

Time: 4 – 6 p.m.

Location: Edmonds College, 20000 68th Ave W, Lynnwood

Dinner and clock hours provided!

Register here: [Computer Science Educator Community of Practice Series](#)

Session 3:

Date: May 14

Time: 4 – 6 p.m.

Location: Whatcom Community College, 237 W Kellogg Rd, Bellingham

Dinner and clock hours provided!

Register here: [Computer Science Educator Community of Practice Series](#)



Spring High School & Beyond Community of Practice dates announced

Career Connect NW is excited to continue our High School & Beyond (HS&B) Community of Practice this year! This professional community of practice offers a valuable opportunity for educators to delve deeper into specific subjects relating to college and career readiness, with a focus on the High School & Beyond Plan.

We have two HS&B Community of Practice gatherings scheduled in Spring 2025:

March 12 - CTE Dual Credit updates

This virtual gathering will take place via ZOOM and will focus on the latest updates regarding the CTE Dual Credit Legislative Proviso project, managed by CCNW staff. This session will highlight the regional collaboration between educators and local community and technical college partners—including Bellingham Technical College, Whatcom

women, students living in rural areas, and students living in poverty.

We foster and promote innovation in approaching how to connect young people to careers, exploring new ways to advance opportunities for students and make them accessible and relevant in their world.

Contact Us

Career Connect NW Network Regional Leads

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Plagge
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Alyssa Jackson
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Career Connected Learning Specialists

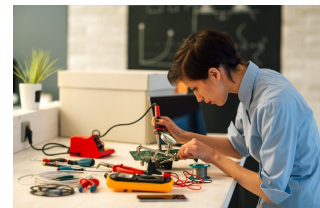
Mary Powers
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Donovan Tate
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Megan Benzing
meganb@snohomishstem.org

Learn more:

www.CareerConnectNW.org
info@CareerConnectNW.org



Community College, Everett Community College, and Skagit Valley College—to align practices and effective strategies to increase access to dual credit for students in our region.

- Event Details:
 - Date: March 12
 - Time: 1 - 3 p.m.
 - Location: ZOOM
 - *Participants are eligible to purchase 2 Clock Hours after completion of this event*
 - Register here: [High School & Beyond Community of Practice – CTE Dual Credit and Legislative Updates](#)

May 21 - 3rd Annual HS&B Community of Practice in-person convening

This in-person gathering will focus on exploring components of the High School and Beyond Plan, any new legislation passed this session, as well as graduation pathways, updated requirements, the HS&B Universal Platform and Career Connect NW's regional strategies to support students throughout our service region (Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom Counties). Through collaboration between educators and community organization staff, equitable practices, strategies, and effective approaches to support students in creating their High School and Beyond Plans will be explored.

- Event Details:
 - Date: May 21
 - Time: 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
 - Location: NWESD, 1601 R Ave., Anacortes
 - *Participants are eligible to purchase 6 Clock Hours after completion of this event*
 - Register here: [2025 High School & Beyond Community of Practice In-Person Convening](#)

If you have any questions about the HS&B Community of Practice, please contact Sinead Fitzpatrick-Plagge (splagge@nwesd.org) or Donovan Tate (dtate@nwesd.org) for more information.



Three events to explore healthcare careers coming in Spring

Career Connect NW is excited to announce a series of healthcare exploration events taking place throughout our region in Spring.

These events are designed for high schools to bring students interested in healthcare to engage in hands-on learning experiences introducing them to these careers. During each event, local healthcare professionals share their expertise and passion for healthcare, offering students a glimpse into the variety of careers within the industry.

Events will be held this Spring in three locations:

Everett Community College: March 24-26

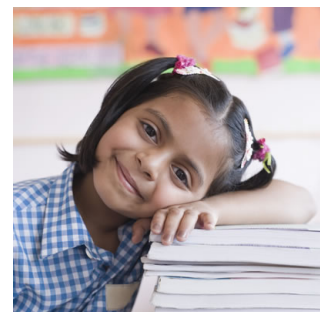
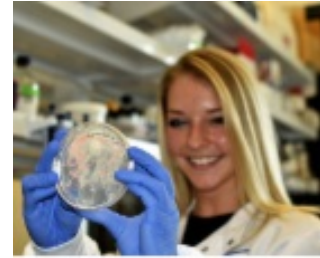
Snohomish STEM is leading this event for Snohomish high schools. Contact Megan Benzing at MeganB@snohomishstem.org

Skagit Valley College: April 1

Career Connect NW is leading this event for Island, San Juan, Skagit, and Whatcom high schools; Donovan Tate (dtate@nwesd.org) will be emailing RSVP information in the coming weeks

Whatcom Community College: April 2-3

Career Connect NW is leading this event for Island San Juan, Skagit, and Whatcom high schools; Donovan Tate (dtate@nwesd.org) will be emailing RSVP information in the coming weeks



Educator professional development in support of healthcare careers: Careers in healthcare are in high-demand. How do educators support students in learning more about these opportunities? Professional development is being created to help educators learn more about these career pathways. Options may include attending an in-person healthcare near you and/or asynchronous opportunities to learn more about these careers. Sign up in our interest form and we will email you more information soon! Check it out here: [Career Connect NW Healthcare Educator Professional Development Interest form](#).

Are you a healthcare professional and want to get involved? Join us as a career speaker, volunteer, or sponsor and play a crucial role in inspiring the next generation of healthcare professionals. For information regarding getting involved in the events in **Skagit or Whatcom Counties**, please fill out this [form](#). For information regarding getting involved in the **Snohomish County** event, contact Megan Benzing at MeganB@snohomishstem.org.



Students at Lucille Umbarger School learning CPR using a Defibrillator device with Nurse Kathy from Peacehealth United General Medical Center.

STEM Like ME!® helps students explore career options

On Nov. 21, Career Connect NW (CCNW) brought STEM Like ME!® to 85 Nooksack Valley Middle School students in 7th and 8th grades. Students rotated in small groups to four STEM Stations to engage in hands-on activities to learn more about careers. Participating employers included bp Cherry Point Refinery with a scientific marshmallow activity, Northwest Maritime Apprenticeship's nautical knot tying station, Northwest Career & Technical Academy's career matching game, and Kacie Guthrie UX Design with the 10,000 Floor Elevator activity.

Thank you to Guide Leaders from CCNW Jenny Veltri and Donovan Tate, FuturesNW Ashley Delatour, and Nooksack Valley Seed to STEM Coordinator Joyce Perkins for making sure students stayed on track during their rotations. Also, a huge thank you to Nooksack Valley Middle School counselor Maryann Holbrook and teacher Sue Peters who made the event possible. Read more [here](#).

A few weeks later on Dec. 5, CCNW brought STEM Like ME!® to 145 students in 7th and 8th grades at Lucille Umbarger School in Burlington. Participating employers included Cascade Ambulance, Sierra Pacific Industries, Silfab Solar, Peacehealth United General Medical, Northwest Career & Technical Academy (NCTA) Education Station, and Skagit Regional Health. Hands-on activities included CPR, Emergency Medical Technician True or False Quiz, Timber 2x4 Game & Lumber Worksheet, Portable Sun & Lightbar Solar Panel Interactions, Living Wage + Career Matching Game, and Taking Vitals.

Much appreciation to 8th grade Science teacher Donna Cole, who made the event possible by requesting STEM Like ME!® for students. Also, a big thank you to Steph Rees, President and CEO from the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, who also reached out to Career Connect NW to request the event in the Burlington-Edison School District so students could learn more about living family wage career options. Read more [here](#).





Students at Nooksack Valley Middle School engaging with bp Cherry Point's marshmallow activity.



Explore IT!

In November, Career Connect NW partnered to launch Explore IT!, a brand-new pilot program in partnership with Everett Public Schools, Everett Community College, and Snohomish STEM. Over 60 students joined us for a one-day deep dive into the world of Computer Science and Information Technology careers.

Students participated in a panel featuring high school and college students and engaged in hands-on career stations with guidance from industry leaders and educators. Huge shoutout to our career speakers from Snohomish County PUD, Seattle Indies, and Everett Community College faculty Ryan Masinelli and Dennis Skarr for inspiring the next generation of tech talent!

Read more [here](#).



Financial aid applications for this year's graduating seniors are available now! A family of four making up to \$131,000 may be eligible for grant aid

In Washington, there are two ways to apply for financial aid. You should only complete one application—the FAFSA or the WASFA.

FAFSA: Most people should complete a **FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) to get the most aid available. The FAFSA is used by U.S. citizens and eligible non-citizens to apply for both state and federal financial aid.

WASFA: The **WASFA** (Washington Application for State Financial Aid) is an application only for **state financial aid**. The WASFA is for people who choose not to file a federal FAFSA application. It can also be used by people who are not eligible to complete the FAFSA due to immigration status, defaulted federal loans, or other issues with federal aid.

Applying for financial aid is a crucial first step toward college or job training. Many families assume they won't qualify, but **there's more help available than ever before**. For 2025-26, a family of four making up to \$131,000 can **qualify for financial aid** in Washington. The only way to know for sure if you're eligible is to apply. Learn more, get support, and apply for financial aid on [WSAC's Apply page](#).



Schools and education advocates can access financial aid resources and promotional materials in the [Financial Aid Toolkit](#). The [12th Year Campaign](#) boosts college and financial aid application rates in Washington by helping those working with high school seniors and their families complete applications for college admissions and financial aid.



Career Connect NW Career Spotlight YouTube video series

To help educators, counselors, and teachers learn more about high-wage, high-demand careers so they can share that information with their students, Career Connect NW is creating a series of short “Career Spotlight” video interviews for the [CCNW YouTube](#) channel.

Each segment focuses on careers in the region identified as in-demand or emerging: Digital Information Technology, Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Maritime, Green Energy, Construction, and more.

[Watch the first video](#) that kicked off the series in January with [Northwest Maritime Apprenticeship Training Program](#)! Mary Powers, Career Connect NW Career Connected Learning Specialist, talks with Sierra Oliver, Program Director. Spend five minutes learning about this great career pathway opportunity.

Our next Career Spotlight guest will feature forest-products company [Sierra Pacific Industries](#) showcasing Modern Manufacturing careers at a high-tech sawmill. Keep an eye out for more videos available soon.

Career Connect NW in the community



Nov. 13: FuturesNW Learning with Leaders

Career Connect NW volunteered to help students explore careers at FuturesNW Learning with Leaders series at Skagit Valley College on Nov. 13. From welcoming students as they arrived on buses, to guiding them through two out of eleven career exploration workshops, the event showcased many programs working together. Congratulations to FuturesNW on a successful event! Read more [here](#).



Nov. 19: Bellingham Technical College Campus Tour Day

Career Connect NW staff attended the Bellingham Technical College Campus Tour Day event on Nov. 19. Joining students and Career/Counseling Staff from around Skagit and Whatcom Counties to learn about the various programs available at BTC, it was amazing to see another event model at work and to network with BTC faculty across multiple pathways. For more information about how to connect your students with BTC check out their [Getting to Know BTC](#) page.



Nov. 20: Seniors toured Sierra Pacific Industries

Orcas Island High School seniors toured Sierra Pacific Industries in Burlington on Nov. 20 to learn about careers in Modern Manufacturing from entry-level to skilled trades, saw filers, truck drivers, foresters, engineers, industrial electricians, millwrights, and more. SPI is one of the largest U.S. lumber manufacturers and offers in-house training for many positions for people ages 18+.



Nov. 20: Gates Foundation's Limitless Learning Network Convening

During the Gates Foundation's Limitless Learning Network Convening in November, Career Connect NW presented alongside Washington STEM regarding "Policy Proposals in the 2025 Legislative Session: How to stay informed & get involved!" Objectives included exploring anticipated proposals in the 2025 state legislative session related to College & Career Navigators and Dual Credit.

Pictured above is one group of Limitless Partners from the NW Region: Bre Olason, College Success Foundation; Trena Hammer, Mount Baker Scholarship Foundation; Nubia Robles and Katie Deorio, Whatcom Community College; and Allison Traff, Mount Baker School District.



Nov. 25: Apprenticeship 101 presentation at Ferndale High School

On Nov. 25, Career Connected Learning Specialist, Donovan Tate, gave an Apprenticeship 101 presentation to students at Ferndale High School. This presentation expands on the Apprenticeship Orientation provided by the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries at the WAVE Tour each year and provides students with an overview of things to consider when thinking about an apprenticeship pathway.

To request an Apprenticeship 101 presentation at your school, visit www.nwesd.org/CCL and request a service or email Donovan Tate directly at dtate@nwesd.org. For more information about the WAVE Tour, check out [WAVE Tour offers hands-on experience to area students](#).



Dec. 9: Whatcom Working Waterfront Holiday Celebration

On Dec. 9, Career Connect NW staff attended the second annual Whatcom Working Waterfront Holiday Celebration. This event brought local apprentices, community leaders,

and legislators together to celebrate another amazing year on the Waterfront! Deb Granger presented information on their new Buoyant Beginnings Pre-Apprenticeship program, the creation of which is funded in part through a Career Connect Washington ABA grant.

We at Career Connect NW are very excited to continue partnering with the Northwest Maritime Apprenticeship, Working Waterfront Coalition and Working Waterfront Foundation in support of the Port of Bellingham's Blue Tech by the Bay event coming in May.



Dec. 18: NW Education and Workforce Leadership Event

Co-hosted by Western Washington University's President Randhawa, Northwest Educational Service District 189's Superintendent Vivanco, and Gates Foundation's Angela Jones, leaders from Bellingham Technical College, Career Connect NW, Northwest Indian College, NW Workforce Council, Skagit Valley College, Whatcom Community College, and regional legislators came together for a NW Education and Workforce Leadership event on Dec. 18 to consider how to strengthen connections specifically between K-12, higher education, and workforce in the NW region. The collective goal: improving educational outcomes and workforce readiness for our students in NW Washington.



Upcoming student career exploration events

Applications Due Feb. 5: Boeing Student Development Program

Boeing is now accepting applications for the 2025 High School and Community / Technical College Manufacturing Student Development Programs! Manufacturing Student Development Programs are designed to provide students with a comprehensive experience, including hands-on training, job site exposure, and career planning support.

For a recap of last summer's programs, check out the videos linked below:

[2024 Core Plus Aerospace High School Manufacturing SDP video](#)

[2024 Community/Technical College Manufacturing SDP video](#)

Students can apply at: <https://boeing.avature.net/wamfgsdp>

Have questions? Email MfgStudentDev@boeing.com

Download the flier [here](#).

Feb. 26: FuturesNW's Learning with Leaders at Bellingham Technical College

Boeing Student Development Program

Learn more: [LEARNING WITH LEADERS — FuturesNW](#)

March 8: Whatcom Community College's Guys & Guts at Whatcom Community College

Registration link: [Guys & Guts Workshop | Whatcom Community College](#)

March 24-26: Healthcare event led by Snohomish STEM at Everett Community College

Registration through high school counselor

For more info, contact Megan Benzing at MeganB@snohomishstem.org

April 1: Healthcare Event led by Career Connect NW at Skagit Valley College

Registration through high school counselor

For more info, contact Donovan Tate at Dtate@nwesd.org

April 2-3: Healthcare Event led by Career Connect NW at Whatcom Community College

Registration through high school counselor

For more info, contact Donovan Tate at Dtate@nwesd.org

April 26: Whatcom Community College's Digital Download at Whatcom Community College

Registration link: [Digital Download Workshop | Whatcom Community College](#)

May 2: FuturesNW's Learning with Leaders at Whatcom Community College

Learn more: [LEARNING WITH LEADERS — FuturesNW](#)

May 7: Blue Tech by the Bay Maritime Career Exploration event at the Fishermen's Pavilion in Bellingham

Registration through high school counselor

[Blue Tech by the Bay event Flyer](#)

For more info, contact Donovan Tate at Dtate@nwesd.org



Professional development and grant opportunities

Cybersecurity Awareness & Career Exploration Workshop for Teachers and Counselors

Join the Center of Excellence for Cybersecurity at Whatcom Community College for an engaging workshop designed for counselors and educators who This interactive session will showcase tools, activities, and resources to inspire and inform students about various cybersecurity career pathways. The workshop will be led by Kristine Christiansen, Computer Information Systems Professor and Director at Moraine Valley Community College. Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your ability to support students on their cybersecurity career journey

- Location: Whatcom Community College, 237 W Kellogg Rd, Bellingham
- Date and time: Wednesday, February 19, 2025 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
- Lunch will be provided from 12 - 1 p.m.
- Organizer: Michael Singletary, (360) 383-3169, msingletary@whatcom.edu
- Register here: [Cybersecurity Career Exploration Workshop for Counselors and Teachers](#)
- 4 STEM clock hours may be available!

Information Technology/Computer Science Community of Practice

Career Connect NW is thrilled to kick off the next series of our Information Technology/Computer Science Community of Practice (CoP). This year, we're excited to welcome three new colleges - Edmonds College, Whatcom Community College, and Bellingham Technical College - into our growing learning community, joining forces with Everett Community College and Skagit Valley College. These collaborations will enhance our discussions as we work together to strengthen pathways from high school to post-secondary education and beyond.

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Dinner and clock hours provided!

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Date: May 14
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Event Details:
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Time: 1 - 3 p.m.
Location: ZOOM
Participants are eligible to purchase 2 Clock Hours after completion of this event
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Event Details:
Date: May 21
Time: 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Location: NWESD, 1601 R Ave., Anacortes
Participants are eligible to purchase 6 Clock Hours after completion of this event
Register here: [2025 High School & Beyond Community of Practice In-Person Convening](#)

Healthcare educator professional development

Educator professional development in support of healthcare careers: Careers in healthcare are in high-demand. How do educators support students in learning more about these opportunities? Professional development is being created to help educators learn more about these career pathways. Options may include attending an in-person ECHO Tour near you and/or asynchronous opportunities to learn more about these careers. Sign up in our interest form and we will email you more information soon!

Link: [Career Connect NW Healthcare Educator Professional Development Interest form](#)

Career Connect Washington training opportunities

You are invited to join Career Connect Washington's Program Builder Trainings series. CCW hopes to increase overall knowledge and understanding on various education and workforce topics. Trainings will be 60 minutes long and the last 30 minutes of the session is reserved for a question-and-answer session with the presenters.

These training sessions are open to anyone who would like to join, and we encourage prospective or current program builders to attend. The trainings are for informational purposes and are not required for current or prospective program builders.

Upcoming trainings include:

Feb. 12 - ESD Workforce Monitoring
Time: 12-1:30 p.m.
Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85673334613?pwd=I3NZOTckSi4GOQZfpzVjFVloC7mmnT.1>

March 12 – Labor Unions & Registered Apprenticeship Standards

Time: 12-1:30 p.m.
Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84334253307?pwd=mVs9wBULIO84vGv9YVsdVAyIE6jYxH.1>

April 23 – SEIU Healthcare 1199NW Training Fund - Consortiums

Time: 12-1:30 p.m.

Link: [https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89447314638?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89447314638?pwd=QnO0yKR2by1oqAuf9BLYaQw1babkMb.1)

[pwd=QnO0yKR2by1oqAuf9BLYaQw1babkMb.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89447314638?pwd=QnO0yKR2by1oqAuf9BLYaQw1babkMb.1)

Grants for Washington State K-12 public school teachers

Applications are now being accepted for the Ellison Education Grants. Grants are for K-12 public school teachers in Washington State. The Ellison foundation has awarded 119 grants and \$562,000 in the past eight years.

Grants will range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 and will be awarded in the spring of 2025 for use during the 2025-2026 school year. Applications must be submitted by March 30.

To learn more about the “Ellison Education Grants” please visit <http://ellison-foundation.org/ellison-education>.

Opportunities for Science Teachers

The NWESD Science Announcements newsletter has a wealth of professional development and other science-related opportunities. This month there is an especially large volume of things to share with you! Click [here](#) to read the newsletter-you can also sign up if interested!

Upcoming professional development events

Looking for online clock hours?

Use our QR code to easily search for upcoming STEM clock hour opportunities. The classes are online via Canvas, asynchronous (so you can take them when and where you want, at your own pace), and between 1 and 10 hours long.



For more information contact: Polly Myers, Online Learning Coordinator, pmyers@nwesd.org, 360-299-4031.

Check out all the Professional Learning events [here](#).

Check out all of events that offer clock hours [here](#).

Sign up for the Career Connect NW e-news [here](#).

To learn more, connect and get involved: www.CareerConnectNW.org.

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