



Virtual STEM Role Model Project Education, Innovation, and Research Grant Project Abstract

Participating School Districts: Grandview, Granger, Mabton, Sunnyside, Wahluke, Yakima

Students to be served: 480 Total (240 Implementation & 240 Control Group)

Plus Scale-up = 2,645

Grades to be served: 8-12

Project Description:

The proposed **Educational Innovation** is to **Research** the impact of the increasing use of new virtual technologies to connect diverse STEM Role Models with farmworker students in isolated small rural communities to examine changes in attitudes about pursuing STEM fields. These students in rural communities **lack** STEM Role Models that look like them and understand their educational challenges. Virtual technology is becoming more universally common and is an emerging and promising innovation to make these connections possible.

There is an abundant amount of evidence that suggests STEM role models have a positive impact with girls. However, there is limited research on STEM role models and their impact on influencing minority and underrepresented students to pursue STEM fields and careers. In addition, there is no research that meets **What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)** standards on the impact role models have on farmworker students. We propose to implement, refine, and evaluate the impact of a Virtual STEM Role Model program that targets low- income, high-need, rural farmworker students.

Summary of Objectives and Expected Outcomes:

The primary objective is the development, adoption, and implementation of the **Virtual STEM Role Model Project** to support Farmworker student's engagement in STEM experiences and the exploration of career pathways in STEM. Farmworker students from 6 districts (scaling up to 22) will participate in 8 virtual interactions with STEM professionals & Near Peer Role Models during each year of the project. Researchers will evaluate data on students' achievement in math and science, enrollment in STEM courses and career pathway interests, and postsecondary STEM program enrollment. A Virtual STEM Role Model Toolkit will be developed to support project scale up.

Special Project Features (Rural Schools & serving Farmworker Students)

As a result of COVID-19, the use of increasing and emerging virtual technologies will be studied to solve the challenge of connecting diverse STEM role models with students in rural schools.

Partnerships:

A Consortia of 6 rural school districts, University of Washington, Washington STEM, Educational Service District 105 and RGI Research Corporation will implement the project.

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