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This We Believe About the Role of Business Education in STEM

Business education prepares students at all educational levels for a wide range of high-growth, high-wage business and STEM-related (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) careers. Through the development of business and technology skills, business education is a pathway to STEM careers because of the crossover of knowledge and skills. Both business and STEM programs provide rigorous and relevant instruction, which empowers students to maximize their potential for success in the workplace or higher education. **We believe** that a strong connection exists between business education and STEM.

Requiring students to think critically and creatively in addressing real-world situations are components of both business and STEM programs. Through experiential and project-based learning, students are able to develop essential skills and knowledge in each discipline. Business and STEM programs **share an emphasis of workforce development, which propels educators to incorporate standards that raise the bar in regard to student preparation and achievement.** Students master the knowledge, applications, and attitudes that reinforce core and workplace competencies. As a result, **business educators connect students to future career opportunities** in a STEM-influenced global work environment.

A clear connection exists between business education and STEM. Many skills taught in business education strengthen those taught in STEM programs. For example, these skills include, but are not limited to:

- critical and creative thinking
- mastering technology
- managing projects through communicating, planning, researching, organizing, analyzing, allocating time and resources, and evaluating finished products
- reading and comprehending information
- calculating and measuring
- identifying relationships and contributions of parts to the whole
- leading and collaborating
- focusing on detail
- troubleshooting and problem solving

We believe these skills drive the business and STEM curriculum to meet the needs of today's workplace as well as those predicted in the future.

The *National Standards for Business Education* are based on the conviction that business and technology competencies are necessary for all students to be competitive in the global marketplace. These standards, as well as the previously mentioned skills, influence the business curriculum, which provide students with lifelong learning skills and confidence in adapting to an ever-changing workplace. This curriculum provides a foundation for business educators to correlate STEM career paths with the traditional business areas of information technology, computer information systems, and other technology-related disciplines. Mastery of technology skills is a requirement rather than an option for enhancing academic, business, and personal performance. Educators must focus on the use of technology as a tool for teaching business and STEM skills to prepare students to be successful in the global business environment, which is increasingly dependent on and defined by technology tools.

We believe that because of business educators' expertise in technology and career readiness, it is natural for them to take the lead in cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary collaboration with STEM educators.

The business education curricula enhance students' skills in the areas of STEM and connect students to growing career opportunities. Therefore, **we believe:**

- business teacher preparation and initial and advanced certification and/or licensure programs must develop a knowledgeable and competent generation of business educators prepared to collaborate with STEM educators.
- business educators must identify skill sets in STEM areas to develop and enhance the integration of business and STEM curricula.
- business educators must evaluate the effectiveness of their pedagogical skills, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques for STEM curricula to determine needs and pursue professional development opportunities.
- business educators must effectively brand and promote business education curricula as a complement to STEM programs by educating administrators, parents, and other stakeholders.

Through career pathways, business education has the unique opportunity to shape a seamless education from K-12 to postsecondary education and/or direct employment. Students benefit from the collaborative effort between business and STEM educators. Business education improves educational and employment opportunities for students to pursue STEM-related careers by:

- providing dual enrollment and other college credit options;
- preparing students to earn industry-based credentials in the areas of information technology, computer information systems, and other technology-related disciplines;
- partnering with employers in STEM career areas to provide students with relevant work-based learning experiences such as internships and mentorships;
- providing students with community service and service-learning opportunities; and
- creating advisory councils with representation from both business and STEM areas.

We believe that business education enhances students' employment opportunities in STEM-related careers through industry credentialing and partnering with stakeholders.

Business and technology skills are pivotal in students' success in STEM-related careers. As business educators, we are poised to lead a collaborative effort to prepare students to enter the workplace or higher education with greater confidence and marketability. With the ever-increasing demand for proficiency in teaching STEM-related skills, business educators play a prominent role in delivering rigorous and relevant instruction necessary for students' success. Business and STEM skills are deeply interwoven, as they are both essential for students' success in a global workplace.

Therefore, we believe the role of business education in STEM is limitless.