

Reflections on the STEM School & Business Innovation Conference  
Des Moines, Iowa, Wednesday, June 29, 2016

Iowa STEM has moved far ahead of many states. Watching the development since the beginning of the Council, I am impressed and heartened at this accomplishment. It is, in Jeff Weld's word...*stementastic!*

This has happened thanks to the leadership and the staff of the Council and the support of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor and the legislature. Education is inextricably tied to politics—even more so today.

This is what I saw, heard and felt today:

1. The passion is palpable.
2. The specifics are multifaceted and numerous.
3. Students can contribute to business and community success.
4. Any project can be right for a student.
5. The work needs to be hands on/ minds on.
6. Fifth graders performed better than older students in the arts. The arts are a major economic driver. We need to start early and often.
7. When schools and businesses work together, policies, protocols and regulations need to be developed
8. Pushing the envelope is encouraged, e.g. the redesigned classroom with appropriate furniture (walls you can write on—like smart boards)
9. The community is everyone: students, parents, educators (preK-16), business & industry, cultural institutions.
10. College and career readiness basically involve the same skills, attitudes and (access to) knowledge.
11. Considering the predictions of jobs in 2030, one of the attendees reminded me that personal computer have only been around for 25 years.

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