

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK  
GOVERNOR



ANGELA McLEAN  
LT. GOVERNOR

May 6, 2015

Education Foundation for BPS  
415 N. 30<sup>th</sup> St.  
Billings, MT 59101

Dear Business Leaders:

As Governor of Montana, I hear about great programs happening around our state. I also hear about problems our businesses and industries face with new employees. Consistent comments revolve around the lack of solid 21<sup>st</sup> Century soft skills like critical thinking, communication, problem solving and teamwork. I'm happy to say that Montana's K-12 public education system is responding to these challenges with quality programs.

The responsibility of preparing our students for the workforce of tomorrow belongs to more than teachers. The whole community has a vested interest and responsibility. Business leaders can play a pivotal role in that preparation, which can take a variety of forms. Offering student internships at your business gives students firsthand experience in the workplace. Providing opportunities for your staff to volunteer in the classroom or speak at schools for career days or job fairs illustrates the value you place on educating and inspiring young students. A financial commitment to directly support student learning enhances and expands opportunities while providing a means for schools to invest in today's tools to prepare students for tomorrow's jobs.

Billings, Montana provides an example of a consequential partnership happening in our state. Billings Public Schools, in partnership with the Education Foundation for Billings Public Schools, and an ever expanding list of businesses in Yellowstone County see a need to expand Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) skills to fill workforce needs in their community. This program not only improves student content knowledge, but teachers observe an increase in collaboration, communication, problem solving and critical thinking happening throughout the school day. As one SM Energy manager noted after a classroom volunteer session, "These kindergarten students communicate and collaborate like my engineers. The teams of students are solving problems and showing the critical thinking skills I need my workers to possess. There is something special happening through this program."

I support the STEM work happening in Billings and in other areas of state. I encourage you to get involved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Bullock".

STEVE BULLOCK  
Governor