

## Leaders and learners grow in co-curricular activities

*Students compete, learn and gain career experience in a number of Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs)*

Traditionally we think of extracurricular or co-curricular activities for students as the long-standing athletics, music and drama programs so much a part of public schools today. These traditional activities build skills, cultural appreciation and teamwork. An increasing number of other school activities are adding options for students. These too are being credited as foundational activities for future leaders and as ways students discover their passions, vocations and avocations.

In Everett Public Schools, this year more than 300 students from Cascade, Everett and Jackson High school take part in CTSO's connected to the schools' STEM and Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes and made possible through federal funding. In these after school, competitive groups, students apply what they learned in class to competitions that often take place away from their schools.

As Executive Director for STEM, Strategic Partnership & Legislation Dana Riley Black notes, "The experiences in the CTSO's make classroom learning relevant to students. The experiences expand learning beyond the classroom and can be driving factors for students to choose careers and education after high school."

Seven organizations, mostly at high schools, engage students in activities, which can have a profound impact on future career choices. They are:

- [Technology Student Association](#) (TSA) at high schools and some middle schools, develops students' personal interests, leadership and career opportunities in STEM. Students apply and integrate STEM concepts through intra-curricular activities and competitive events.

---more---

"Offering these CTSOs and purposefully making them available to a greater number and diversity of students is a district priority," according to Dana Riley Black.

"The experiences students have today in these programs helps set the stage for their readiness in [Career Pathway programs](#) planned in the Feb. 13 Capital Bond."



*In October, Cascade High School DECA students visited WorkSource Everett to learn about career possibilities in the region and about that organization's business model.*

- [Health Occupation Student Association](#) (HOSA) empowers future health professionals to become leaders in the global health community through education, collaboration and experience.
- [Educators Rising](#) seeks to guide young people on a path to becoming accomplished teachers, beginning in high school and extending to college.
- [DECA](#) prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools around the globe.
- [Washington Career and Technical Sports Medicine Association](#) introduces students to a variety of sports medicine professions and prepares them for success through quality leadership and educational opportunities.
- [SkillsUSA](#) is a partnership of students, teachers, and industry leaders working together to ensure America has a skilled work force.
- [Family, Career and Community Leadership Association](#) promotes personal growth through family and consumer sciences education, focusing on the multiple roles of family member, wage earner, and community leader. Members develop skills for life through character development, creative and critical thinking, interpersonal communication, practical knowledge and career preparation.

Although not state recognized CTSOs, the district's 50 robotics clubs for students in elementary through high school have similar goals and outcomes, according to Brian Day, director of STEM and CTE. "Students engaged in robotics learn to problem-solve in teams; they grow creatively and explore ways of learning and applying knowledge. They become great leaders."

---end---

**For more information:**

**[Leanna Albrecht](#), Director of Communications, 425-385-4040**