



LEARNING IN ACTION



## BRIGHT SPOT STEM Careers in Sight

### Priest River Elementary Ready, Set, Drones!



In a region of Idaho where the Aviation and Aeronautics industries call home, the reverberation of jet engines flying overhead awaken the imaginations of Priest River Elementary students. From the moment educator Chis Naccarato made drones available in the classroom, the impact was to infinity and beyond. Fifth-graders are now leading the charge as pilots in an aviation sector that knows no age limits: drone flight.

“Ready Set Drones”, a hands-on learning opportunity provided through an Idaho STEM Action Center grant program, provides educators with a drone package and educator instruction to train students in drone flight, simulating real-world aviation environments. Each year, educator Chris Naccarato teaches aviation studies for the first semester, and space flight in the second half of the year, hosting a big event to go with each. The aviation project previously used paper airplanes and competitions to inspire students to develop their design ideas. Always upping the game in the name of real-life learning, Naccarato introduced the drone flight program as the next phase in aviation and aerospace education for Priest River Elementary students. The space flight studies culminate in a space day event complete with the launching of several rockets and celebrity astronaut appearances. Naccarato attended the drone training at North Idaho College over the summer to be flight-ready.

To further inspire students, the Ready Set Drones event provided opportunities to engage with STEM professionals and role models. Astronaut and motivational speaker, Col. Mike Mullane, was Naccarato’s guest for the inaugural drone event, speaking to the entire school before two pilots from the Spokane FPV drone racing league kicked off the flying action.

Northern Idaho is home to approximately one-third of aerospace jobs in the state. Priest River Elementary students are connecting to these STEM professionals and finding inspiration. Programs like Ready, Set, Drones take that awareness and provide an environment for building a foundation of drone piloting skills and competence.

The aerospace industry in Idaho is projected to grow at a rate of 41% within 10 years. More than three dozen aerospace companies are located in Northern Idaho, with increases each year. Idaho’s relatively untrafficked airspace provides opportunities for growth in aviation technologies, such as Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). Idaho is the launch pad for a field that thrives on innovation and a STEM educated workforce. The students of Priest River are ready for take-off.



**STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. It’s in these subjects that students learn the skills of critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration— skills that translate to success in many fields. The STEM Action Center is here to support this development and provide Idaho with the talent pipeline it needs for its economy to thrive. Idaho can generate a strong, STEM-competent and competitive workforce that will make us become a prime STEM business destination.**





## We build STEM through:

### EDUCATOR ACCESS

to STEM professional development  
THROUGHOUT IDAHO

**17,000**  
EDUCATOR  
INTERACTIONS

### WORKFORCE

development-focused  
partnerships with **INDUSTRY**  
and **UNIVERSITIES**

**8,000**  
STEM EDUCATION  
interactions through  
communities and  
businesses

Student  
**STEM Competitions**  
and camp support

**500,000**  
STUDENT  
INTERACTIONS

*Today's students will be  
tomorrow's workforce,  
and STEM AC  
has been created  
to develop the  
STEM-skilled talent that  
Idaho employers need.*

## INDUSTRY PARTNERS



## TODAY'S EFFORTS. TOMORROW'S SUCCESSES.

*Industry participation is essential for success, and we're here to help make that participation easier. We've created many ways for Idaho businesses to engage with STEM education. From mentoring and volunteering to donating and partnering, you can help move the economy forward by closing the gaps in Idaho's workforce. Let us help you help Idaho!*

## LEARN MORE

*To learn more about the STEM Action Center's strategies, success stories, and positive impacts in your community, email: [admin@stem.idaho.gov](mailto:admin@stem.idaho.gov).*



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