

WORKING TO ENSURE ECONOMIC AND STUDENT SUCCESS IN SPOKANE

“We want our students on the cutting edge of creating their future. Students, parents, educators and the business world working together.”

—Associate Executive Director of Technology and Career and Technical Education, Mead School District, Spokane

Connecting Students to Careers through Deeper Learning.

The Greater Spokane Incorporated (GSI) Education & Workforce Department is helping to reimagine the way students learn, matching students with hands-on, real-world experiences that make future college and career plans a reality. Through GSI’s initiatives, Spokane businesses are directly involved in the education of today’s students and tomorrow’s workforce, providing Deeper Learning opportunities that boost graduation rates and help students think critically, communicate effectively, collaborate and direct their own learning.

Recognizing the gap between what students were learning and what employers needed—especially in growing industries such as manufacturing, aerospace and health care—GSI has created partnerships between industry sectors, businesses and the education community to promote greater career awareness and explain what students need to be successful in the Spokane workforce.

Partnerships and programs include:

- **WORK 101**: This internship program pairs high school students with area businesses to provide experience in real-world settings and the opportunity to develop the skills needed to meet the demands of the future workplace. This program, managed by GSI in partnership with Mead and Central Valley school districts and the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council, paired 60 students in extended job shadows at over 20 companies in Spokane during its first year.
- **Business AfterSchool!**: This series of weeklong industry open house workshops for students, educators, parents and community organizations provides on-site awareness of Spokane's high-demand industries. GSI organizes four industry weeks per year: Engineering, Health Care, Manufacturing and Computer Science, and includes site tours, student projects and career information. To learn more about business sponsorships, [check out this fact sheet](#).

Quick Facts: Spokane

- Spokane’s economic recovery has been partially led by its new medical school, which is attracting health research, bio-tech and pharmaceutical companies to the area. (Source: [Spokane County Profile, WA State Employment Security Department](#))
- High-tech companies in manufacturing, science and technical industries are creating the majority of new jobs in Spokane. (Source: [Spokane County Profile, WA State Employment Security Department](#))

GSI is preparing students for workforce success by developing programs that bring multiple stakeholders together to:

- Give students real world career experiences
- Provide networking and professional development opportunities for educators

GSI’s work is funded primarily through membership, grant dollars, foundation investments and partnership agreements.

- **Teaching The Teachers Workshops:** These workshops give educators the chance to experience what future opportunities for work and education await their students. A typical workshop will tour both a local business and a higher education facility, so that teachers can learn how to teach students to see connections between their learnings in the classroom and future careers. In 2013, GSI organized eight Teaching the Teachers workshops, serving teachers from 12 school districts that reach approximately 4,325 students.

Convening Leaders in Education, the Business Community, Higher Ed and Community Organizations.

Businesses have a stake in ensuring that students are prepared to meet the demands of the manufacturing, science and technical industries that make up the majority of new jobs in Spokane. GSI facilitates plenty of opportunities to collaborate on needs and solutions.

- **Spokane STEM:** A network of leaders from P-12 education, the business community, higher education and community organizations, Spokane STEM was launched with the goal of enhancing educational achievement through special emphasis on math and science learning. The group is focused on transforming how STEM is taught in the classroom, providing the supports necessary for teachers, increasing postsecondary access and completion through an emphasis on work-based learning and enhancing community awareness and understanding of STEM.
- **Priority Spokane:** A program partner of GSI, Priority Spokane fosters measurable improvements that build a culture of health, with an emphasis on education and emotional resiliency. Its steering committee is comprised of various community organizations involved with safety, health, the economy, education and the environment.

Business and Higher Education Engagement

GSI has approached education from an economic development standpoint and has provided a number of collaborative opportunities to build awareness and identify innovative partnerships.

- Since 2004, GSI has convened business leaders from key industry sectors to learn more about education needs from employers' perspectives.
- GSI engages directly with schools through the Higher Education Leadership Group and K-12 Education Roundtable.
- The Board of Trustees includes the four College Presidents and a Community College Chancellor, as well as three K-12 superintendents.
- GSI staff provides a consistent thread through all of these efforts, helping to connect the business and education communities, support partnerships and initiatives and advocate on behalf of the region.



Deeper Learning uses interactive techniques such as project-based learning and real-world application to engage students in core academics and build the skills they need for success in college and career.

Your Chamber can prepare the future workforce for success in a globally competitive economy by building partnerships across sectors that help students become innovative, collaborative and flexible employees.

Visit GreaterSpokane.org/Education-and-Workforce to learn more.