

4 reasons why investing in STEM is good business

January 13, 2017, 10:36 AM

This content is sponsored by [Unanet](#)

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, over the past 10 years, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) jobs grew three times as fast as non-STEM jobs and STEM workers commanded higher wages, earning 26 percent more than their non-STEM counterparts.

To help prepare to meet these future demands, local firms like [Unanet](#), a Northern Virginia developer of software for Professional Services firms, have made STEM education a priority for many years. Here are four reasons why supporting STEM is important for our region and just makes good business sense:

Next Generation – Our kids are the future, and the economic landscape of our region leans heavily towards careers in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. By investing in programs for our children, we can help set up both them and our community for future success.

In our area, there are many opportunities to bring STEM activities within reach of our children. For younger children, programs such as those offered by the [Children's Science Center](#) offer wonderful hands-on opportunities to explore, create, and be inspired. For our local high- schoolers, regional science and engineering fairs offer many opportunities for hands-on learning. Local businesses can get involved by volunteering, mentoring and sponsoring these events. Students benefit from understanding how their classes have real world applications and relevance.

Job Growth – As highlighted in the stats mentioned above, careers in the fields represented by STEM are expected to grow at greater rates than non-STEM jobs. As technologies continue to develop and create innovative job opportunities, our community needs to prepare to meet those needs. By investing in STEM education and devoting resources to the next generation of scientists, computer programmers, and mechanical engineers, we will ensure that our work force will be able to fill these needs. This investment and preparation for the future will contribute to the Metro region's role as a technology epicenter.

Competitive Now and in the Future – Finding qualified candidates remains a constant headache for HR and recruiting teams across the nation, and especially in the DMV region.

While an investment in the next generation doesn't solve today's recruiting challenges, it does make us more competitive by making the area appealing to technology companies, qualified tech-focused employees, and families looking for a competitive education environment.

Society – By making STEM a focus, we are preparing a society that is more informed on complex issues. Even if the next generation chooses to not pursue these fields as a career, they will undoubtedly bring many of these skills to whatever they end up doing! According to the same U.S. Department of Commerce report, “STEM degree holders enjoy higher earnings, regardless of whether they work in STEM or non-STEM occupations.”

The wonderful thing about STEM is that there are so many opportunities to get involved. While many companies are in a position to help the cause through their [philanthropic efforts](#), individuals can easily support STEM initiatives through their volunteering efforts and the gift of their expertise. Together we can drive the growth of the area as a technology hotbed with a thriving ecosystem.