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Full STEAM Ahead – a Collaborative Colloquium

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at Contra Costa County Office of Education, Contra Costa County, California, USA

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Abstract

On February 2, 2012, Contra Costa County Office of Education organized its 2nd Annual STEAM Colloquium: Full STEAM Ahead. This forum brought together over 150 educators, business leaders and community members to discuss and share best practices in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education

Author/Artist Bio

Hilary Dito is the STEAM Coordinator at Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE). Dito works with eighteen school districts, businesses and community organizations to increase STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education for all students in Contra Costa County. Prior to being a STEAM Coordinator Dito was an Assistant Principal in the San Ramon Unified School District. To learn more about CCCOE STEAM see cocoschools.org/steam

Keywords

STEAM, STEM, Professional Development, Industry, Education, Collaborative Colloquium

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Full STEAM Ahead – a Collaborative Colloquium

Hilary Dito

On February 2, 2012, Contra Costa County Office of Education organized its 2nd Annual STEAM Colloquium: Full STEAM Ahead. This forum brought together over 150 educators, business leaders and community members to discuss and share best practices in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education. The day included individual and collaborative presentations, roundtable discussions, and networking opportunities all focused around the challenges and rewards in developing and supporting STEAM education.

So why STEAM? Dr. Joseph A. Ovick, Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools, stated:

“If our children are going to succeed as responsible adults in a knowledge-based economy and a global neighborhood, STEAM is vitally important for their benefit and the benefit of our nation. With the support of government at the federal, state, and local levels, as well as support and endorsements from our business community and the regional arts, we collectively as educators in Contra Costa County will bring forward new and exciting opportunities to better prepare our young people for a world we cannot even imagine.”

STEAM is an avenue through which individuals facing rapid change in today’s economic future can be prepared by mastering Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics knowledge in concert with Artistic Creativity. The greatest STEM achievements will not occur without the innovative spirit that art brings to life.

To prepare our students for global competition, we must work collaboratively to ensure that all students are college and career ready. Business leaders are demanding skilled workers who can communicate effectively, collaborate with teams and think critically about problems. Educators need to engage students in learning while also ensuring they are prepared for 21st Century careers. Community members have a vital interest in creating partnerships between educators and business leaders as they address the needs of their citizens. If we want to provide our children with opportunities to succeed, we need to act now by engaging students in STEAM – giving children the knowledge and creativity to build a future in tomorrow’s world.

The STEAM Colloquium encouraged stakeholders to examine their roles in education and launched the conversation about addressing the needs for all students to be STEAM literate. This entails a deeper understanding of how the arts and science intersect to further learning in and out of classrooms. Our journey is just beginning as we develop networks and examine best practices to move us *Full STEAM Ahead*.

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