

STEM Scholars Summer Field Site Experience Florida A and M University Center for Viticultural Sciences and Small Fruit Research

Participating School Districts



Panhandle Area Educational Consortium

Patrick L. McDaniel, Executive Director

Calhoun

Franklin

Gadsden

Gulf

Holmes

Jackson

Jefferson

Liberty

Madison

Taylor

Wakulla

Walton

Washington



Heartland Educational Consortium

Dr. Debra Elliott, Executive Director

DeSoto

Glades

Hardee

Hendry

Highlands

Okeechobee



North East Florida Educational Consortium

James Surrency, Ph.D., Executive Director

Columbia

Flagler

Gilchrist

Lafayette

Levy

P.K. Yonge

Putnam

Union

Summer STEM Field Site/Workplace Experiences, across the districts served by the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium, have allowed STEM Scholars to learn about STEM-related careers in their communities through personal experiences with STEM Talent Development Partners. This has been a valuable experience for participants and has contributed to their development which will help them to meet the demands of Florida's future economy.

Through the *FloridaLearns STEM Scholars* Project's Talent Development Program, high school juniors and seniors from small districts across Florida participated in eight-day Field Site/Workplace Experiences this summer. These experiences are made possible through partnerships with leaders in STEM industries such as local businesses, agencies, the military, and higher education faculty. The experiences offered by these STEM Talent Developers are preparing STEM Scholars to become STEM-ready by demonstrating the value of real world interactions with STEM.

The Center for Viticultural Sciences and Small Fruit Research in the College of Engineering Science, Technology and Agriculture at Florida A & M University offered an opportunity for three students from Jefferson County Middle High School to work with scientists in their Biotechnology, Viticulture and Product Development, Genetics, and Small Fruits labs. Students' experiences included an overview of the Viticulture and Small Fruit Program and field/vineyard and greenhouse experiences. Students learned how to extract DNA, distinguish male and female plants and/or flowers, and how to systematically cross pollinate flowers. Faculty members, Anthony Ananga, Ph. D. and Stephen Leong, Ph.D. led the experience.

"This was an intense and extensive experience although the amount of time was relatively short. However, it gave them excellent insight, knowledge and experience into a variety of career fields which will last a lifetime," stated Mr. Willie Saffo. This opportunity was the culmination of activities for the *FloridaLearns STEM Scholars* Program for the 2013-2014 school year.

Also, the *FloridaLearns STEM* Scholars Summer Challenge was held during the week of June 9-12, 2014 at Tallahassee Community College. Six students from Jefferson County Middle High School attended and completed the challenge.

"These experiences and opportunities are extremely invaluable to the future success of our children," stated Mr. Saffo. Mr. Saffo is the STEM Mentor Teacher and advisor for the STEM Program. He is also accompanied by Ms. Algeletha Mitchell, co-advisor and Chief Kent Watson, consultant and advisor.



Estela Valdovinos listens as one of the Center's researchers explains results of an experiment she has completed.