

Science Statesmanship

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES HAS reported the decline in U.S. science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education time and time again (1, 2). Despite these findings, the federal government has not substantially increased its funding of science education.

North Carolina has found a creative solution by leveraging its own (albeit limited) state budget. The state science museum has been transformed into a hub for science research, education, and outreach technologies. Called the Nature Research Center (NRC), a new 24,000-m² wing of the existing museum was funded through public-private partnerships, creating a statewide “one-stop shop” for all facets of science education. All K-12 classrooms in North Carolina are linked through the Internet to the NRC’s multimedia technology theater, where scientists will broadcast their discoveries. Technology platforms in the NRC foster science communication to diverse audiences throughout the state (and beyond), including K-12, citizens, educators, and policy-makers.

STEM education is a responsibility for everyone—federal, state, and local governments, as well as parents and students themselves. By creating a hub for cutting-edge science research, education, and communication, North Carolina is ensuring a strong pipeline of exceptional STEM students into the workforce. **MARGARET DALZELL LOWMAN**

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References

1. National Academy of Sciences, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm* (National Academies Press, Washington, DC, 2007).
2. National Academy of Sciences, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm, Revisited* (National Academies Press, Washington, DC, 2010).