

New Partnership Focuses Attention on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Career Pathways

Destination Imagination, National Girls Collaborative, National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity, and Educational Research Center of America Launch New National Research Consortium

FARMINGDALE, N.Y., February 25, 2015 – As talk about being “college and career ready” continues to dominate many education debates, Destination Imagination (DI), the National Girls Collaborative (NGC), the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) and the Educational Research Center of America (ERCA) announced today that they are forming a new research consortium to ensure a strong national discussion among parents, educators and counselors, and students on STEM career pathways.

The consortium will work collaboratively to explore students’ aspirations toward a range of STEM careers and some of the influences on those aspirations. Feedback from students will also be compared and contrasted with trends and opportunities in STEM careers. DI, NGC, NAPE, and ERCA have agreed to a multi-year engagement that will help use the data to better prepare students for their careers ahead.

“Future research is needed to examine the individual components of the perseverance construct (brain optimization, mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and self-determination), and their relationship to creativity and 21st century skill development. We are excited to be a participant in this research consortium to measure students’ career and educational aspirations and their perceptions about creativity and STEM careers. This data will be invaluable in framing a national discussion,” commented Dr. Chuck Cadle, CEO, Destination Imagination.

“The National Girls Collaborative is honored to be a part of the research consortium with DI, NAPE, and ERCA. Collaboration is the foundation of all the work we do and we firmly believe we can accomplish more together than any one institution can accomplish alone,” said Karen Peterson, CEO, National Girls Collaborative. “We look forward to better understanding and informing students, parents, and educators related to STEM career pathways in order to provide more equitable opportunities to all students and develop a more diverse workforce.”

“Increasing equity in STEM and producing a skilled workforce prepared to meet the challenges of today’s high-skill, high-tech career opportunities is of paramount importance on both the education and economic fronts. NAPE’s goal in partnering in the research consortium is to provide educators with the tools they need to increase students’ interest in pursuing and completing a STEM program or STEM-related CTE pathway. Critical to the success of this effort is ensuring equal access to STEM programs for each and every student, especially for traditionally underrepresented students, such as female students, students of color, and students with disabilities,” remarked Mimi Lufkin, CEO, National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity.

“As the economy evolves, students, parents, guidance counselors, and educators continue to look for the best opportunities for today’s learners,” ERCA Executive Director Ed Doody said. “With this new research initiative, we expect to better inform all involved in the process about STEM careers, focusing on both what is needed today and what is needed tomorrow. And there are no better partners to lead such an effort than DI, NGC, and NAPE.”

About Destination Imagination

Founded in 1982, Destination Imagination (DI), a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, is cause driven to ready students world-wide for college, career, and life beyond school through opportunities that promote and support creativity, imagination, contextual learning, arts appreciation, STEM-based skills development, and entrepreneurship leading to an engaged and future-ready student population. Learning how and when to be creative, how to build cross-cultural teams, how to manage budgets and risk, how to present a compelling proposal, and how to manage a project from beginning to end will provide students with the necessary skills to become the next generation of problem finders and solvers, innovators, cross-cultural collaborators, entrepreneurs and leaders. To learn more, see: www.destinationimagination.org

About National Girls Collaborative

The National Girls Collaborative Project (NGCP) brings together organizations that are committed to informing and encouraging girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). By facilitating collaboration, sharing resources, and providing professional development, NGCP maximizes access to shared resources, strengthens the capacity of programs and organizations to effectively engage girls in STEM, and uses the leverage of a network to create the tipping point for gender equity in STEM. NGCP currently supports 31 Collaboratives in 39 states and indirectly serves over 8.5 million girls. For more on the National Girls Collaborative see: www.ngcproject.org

About National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity

The National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) builds educators' capacity to implement effective solutions for increasing student access, educational equity and workforce diversity. Every person is able to fulfill his or her potential through equal access to and equity in educational options that lead to the entire spectrum of career choices. NAPE focuses on:

- Research-based approaches to program development and public policy using data to drive effective implementation.
- Responsiveness to the changing needs of the educational community and stakeholders.
- Innovative solutions to deliver cutting-edge equity strategies in an ever-changing learning environment.
- Collaborative efforts to engage with a wide range of partners to reach STEM, CTE, and special populations. For more on NAPE, see: www.napequity.org

About ERCA

For nearly 20 years, the Educational Research Center of America (ERCA) has pursued a mission of helping high school students and their families to identify a college- and career-ready pathway. ERCA helps families identify student options on career pathways to life success, including two- and four-year college opportunities. Through a partnership with and the support of ASL Marketing, ERCA provides introductions to post-secondary institutions. Additionally, as part of its mission, ERCA annually awards postsecondary scholarships to deserving students seeking to improve their communities and society at large. Working in concert with partner organizations engaged in education and workforce development, ERCA's research has a singular objective; motivating students to explore career pathways relevant to their interests, education and passions. For more information, visit www.studentresearch.org and follow @ERCAResearch on Twitter.

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