Hey, Texas: STEM education is vital to our future

By Carol L. Foster
and Kimberly Hughes

With science, technology, engineering and math driving long-term growth, Texas is poised for a bright economic future. Over the past decade, the state has improved its STEM skills, but fewer students have opted into STEM-related career fields. To survive, we have to ensure our economy has access to the competent workforce it needs to attract new talent, young people equipped with a strong STEM foundation.

In order to build a strong STEM foundation, we have a good job to do regarding STEM teaching in our schools. The need for well-trained teachers is increasing as these fields become more critical. Last year, Texas ranked 40th in the nation for teacher salaries despite the fact that math and science teachers earn more than some of their colleagues.

As the STEM education infrastructure continues to grow, we need to incorporate technology into our classrooms, including a wide array of hands-on activities and lessons to build student interest and improve dople STEM education. The training and teaching of our classrooms and managing accreditation is important. Only by supporting these challenges together will we have a bright future.

Last month, Texas' STEM education leaders came together to discuss future challenges in their fields. A common theme was finding strategies to improve STEM education in our schools. It is important to recognize that our students need to be engaged and excited about STEM education. We have to teach them early about STEM education opportunities and help them understand the importance of STEM education. By making our voice heard in FSA meetings, local boards of education, the state Legislature and at our own kitchen tables, we can ensure that STEM education is a priority in Texas.

As Texas' education leaders and those working to advance STEM education, we hope to see the state Legislature and the Texas Education Agency continue to support STEM education. By working together, we can work to increase the number of STEM teachers in our schools and ensure that our students are prepared for the future.

Join the conversation and let us know your thoughts on STEM education in Texas. We welcome your feedback and ideas on how we can improve STEM education in our schools.