Ken Harvey: 00:00 I'm Ken Harvey and this is Check It Out podcast and I'm joined in the studio by Susan Hempstead who is stepping into a new role with us as a fellow interviewer. Susan, give our audience an idea of what's in store for this episode.

Susan Hempstead: 00:14 Thanks Ken and I'm happy to be here. We are excited to be spending time with two special guests. Patrick Pierce, is the President and CEO of Economic Alliance Snohomish County and Angie Sievers is the Director of the Snohomish STEM Network. Today we're going to learn that STEM is not just about trees and we're going to learn that good times don't always last without good planning, and what is the connection between career connected learning and opportunities for our students for the workforce of the future?

Ken Harvey: 00:43 Okay, lots of great stuff in store. This episode is about to begin.

Speaker 4: 00:57 Welcome to season two and episode 23 of Check It Out, the Sno-Isle Libraries podcast for lifelong learners with inquiring minds.

Speaker 5: 01:05 The views and opinions expressed on this podcast may not necessarily reflect the official position of Sno-Isle Libraries.

Ken Harvey: 01:13 Well, I'm delighted to be joined in the studio this afternoon with a new co-host, a new interviewer who has joined our team, Susan Hempstead.

Susan Hempstead: 01:21 Thank you.

Ken Harvey: 01:21 Hi Susan.

Susan Hempstead: 01:23 Hi. How are we doing today?

Ken Harvey: 01:23 We are great. Susan is the Sno-Isle Libraries' Strategic Relations Manager and she just does a great job for us and I thought, man, she just knows so many people throughout this region, I
wanted to bring her contacts and her relationships and relationship skills to the table and take advantage of them, especially in this occasion in which we welcome to this episode, Patrick Pierce, who’s the CEO and President of the Economic Alliance Snohomish county and Angie Sievers who's the Director of the Snohomish STEM Network. So welcome.

Patrick Pierce: 02:06 Thank you. [crosstalk 00:02:06] Great to be here.

Susan Hempstead: 02:06 Happy you’re here. Would love to know EASC, Economic Alliance of Snohomish County. People know a lot about your name, but Patrick, tell us a little bit about what's top of mind for you, your organization, and how you came to be.

Patrick Pierce: 02:22 Yeah. We're ... Really, our mission is around creating jobs, keeping jobs in Snohomish County. If you look at that, if you look at lots of measures on health and things like that and the health of people, health of place, it's about jobs, it's about educational opportunities, it's about transportation infrastructure, so people and goods can move around. So really we focus our efforts on being that catalyst for those activities. That could be, working with existing companies, attracting existing companies, having a voice for Snohomish County with our businesses, our local governments and nonprofits, so in those different places people know what we need. If we can advocate on those things that we can need and bring people together around those, then we can all achieve what we want, which is economically vital, robust places that people want to live, people want to raise kids, people want to move to and continue to grow. That's Economic Alliance in a nutshell.

Susan Hempstead: 03:20 I imagine one of the issues that you'll hear from your membership a lot is workforce development, talented workforce, how do we find the workforce of the future and what are we looking for? What are you hearing from your members right now about workforce development?

Patrick Pierce: 03:35 Just that. I've met with a handful of companies this week for a variety of reasons and workforce has been at the top of mind. So it's how do we find, how do we keep the workers that we have now, how do we think about those strategies? How do we inspire and make sure that kids coming up through the system, through the K2 to the K12 system, through the community college and university system, know about the wonderful jobs that are here, the robust economy we have here in Snohomish County and want to get engaged in it? Of course, there's talent attraction strategies. How do we make sure that we're marketing so people know that you can move to Snohomish
County, with relatively affordable place to live, with great aerospace and life sciences and all these wonderful things that we have going here in Snohomish County. How do we make sure people know that this is an attractive place to come live and raise a family and attracting that talent?

Susan Hempstead: 04:25 Well, and that term, workforce, Ken, it means so many things to so many people. Angie at the Snohomish STEM Network, what does workforce mean to you and what are you focused on?

Angie Sievers: 04:36 We’re focused on connecting community, young adults and children, and families quite honestly with the industries that exist in Snohomish County, as well as government and nonprofit. So really bridging all of our resources and community together so that their pathways can connect and flow. To Patrick’s point, they know what exists here in our county.

Ken Harvey: 05:01 STEM is one of those words that people hear, I think a lot, but maybe not everyone automatically understands that it’s an acronym, it stands for something. Walk us through what it stands for and what that means.


Ken Harvey: 05:27 A in STEAM? [crosstalk 00:05:27].

Angie Sievers: 05:27 In STREAM, R is for reading. Really, we need to be able to communicate whether we’re doing science, math, technology, whatever we’re doing, we need to be able to communicate. Then the art piece of it is really around creativity and bridging those things.

Susan Hempstead: 05:45 I imagine on the spectrum of STEM, kids and parents and industry hear STEM and they might have a particular mindset. What does STEM mean to you and what do you think it means to kids who are hearing that word and their parents? Is there a spectrum? Is there a range? Is there ...

Angie Sievers: 06:01 Great question. Absolutely. I think traditionally it’s just science and technology and math and it’s very linear. In today’s educational world and workforce, it’s really about learning. It’s about challenging ideas and being creative, and applying them to solve problems and create new things.
Ken Harvey: 06:25 Well, I think that our audience may be interested in knowing why we have the two of you together in this podcast. How would you explain that? What's the connection between the Snohomish STEM Network and Economic Alliance Snohomish County?

Patrick Pierce: 06:41 A couple of years ago we decided that it made a lot of sense because of what we're hearing from our investors in Economic Alliance and just communities in general, that workforce continues to be a key issue and that's gone through economic cycles. It's not just a product of our time. Obviously, very low unemployment now, there's an acute issue here, but really if we're going to be competitive and continue to be competitive into the future, it's an area focus. So bringing that STEM network underneath the umbrella of Snohomish County made a lot of sense in terms of being able to work with our employers, working with our school districts, our higher education partners. All of those folks are already at the table, our nonprofit partners, all of those people are at the table with Economic Alliance already. So being able to have that there just seemed to make a lot of sense.

Ken Harvey: 07:32 Patrick, I'd like to just go back to something that you were saying, based upon Susan's first question about purpose and mission of Economic Alliance. I want to just make sure that the audience really has an opportunity to absorb something that you said. You talked about Snohomish County as a great place to work, play and live and you used words like vital and viable and all, what is it that makes, from Economic Alliance's standpoint, makes Snohomish County that type of place and what does it take to keep us that type of place?

Patrick Pierce: 08:14 Our perspective and the way we see the world is the starting point of that, is having a vital economy. That's having jobs, having employers, being able to be a place where you can raise your family. That's a great place to work, play and live and you used words like vital and viable and all, what is it that makes, from Economic Alliance's standpoint, makes Snohomish County that type of place and what does it take to keep us that type of place?
Patrick Pierce: 09:04  There's also the philanthropic element there. Those are the people that are giving to those nonprofits, their time ... Time, talent, treasure to those organizations. That creates that social fabric there that then we all benefit from. So if we can have a robust and vitally economy with great employers here that are hiring people and growing in all of those things, that helps the tax rolls. So those essential public services are there, so our governments can provide those services. The nonprofits are there and we're living in the kind of place that people want to be a part of and want to continue to be a part of from one generation to another.

Susan Hempstead: 09:38  This is such an exciting time because in diversifying the economy you actually have a new industry, a new business partner that has just arrived in Paine Field. I would love for you to share with us about what that has meant to Snohomish County, what it will mean and then really what we think that students are seeing in that opportunity as new career paths and new career pathways.

Patrick Pierce: 10:01  Well, certainly it's something that ... I've mentioned this to a few people, in my office I've got an org chart back from 1990 than has air transportation, like subcommittee of our board. It's been on people's minds for decades-

Susan Hempstead: 10:15  Right on time.

Patrick Pierce: 10:15  It's absolutely just been a fantastic experience. I had a chance to fly out of there last weekend and it was under five minutes from getting out of my Uber-

Ken Harvey: 10:25  You flew out of Paine Field?

Patrick Pierce: 10:26  I flew out at Paine Field to San Francisco to go visit a friend of mine down there.

Ken Harvey: 10:30  From Everett, Mukilteo?

Patrick Pierce: 10:31  Yes, to San Francisco.

Angie Sievers: 10:34  On Alaska Airlines?

Patrick Pierce: 10:35  On Alaska Airlines. It was five minutes from getting out of the car, to getting through security and being at the gate and it's just a fantastic experience. I think when we talk with companies, a lot of ... We're blessed in the sense that we have companies here from throughout the world and a lot of those
people have offices in different facilities throughout the United States, throughout the world. So the ability for those companies that already are here to access their other offices in their backyard rather than having to drive through the difficult commute on I-5 and 4-5 to get to SeaTac is huge. That continues to make us ... It adds stickiness to our region in terms of why they want to continue to stay here and invest here.

Patrick Pierce: 11:14 Then from an attraction standpoint, both domestically and internationally, when we think about companies here, while it’s not an international airport, the opportunity to say, "Hey, you can fly from Europe, you can fly from Asia," and we’re about equidistant there. It's about nine hour flight from either one and then get off in LAX, get off at San Francisco, be able to take a quick transfer and you're in your backyard and you're 15, 20 minutes from your facility. That again is just adding to the attractiveness and the continued opportunities that I think we have to leverage that airport.

Patrick Pierce: 11:45 We’re also looking at tourism, other opportunities there in terms of bringing more of that in. So I think, it really, I think from a tourism, hospitality, conventions, all these different things, it's just a one more important piece of transportation infrastructure.

Susan Hempstead: 11:58 And it's opening up the diversity of our economy. When you look at, we've always been an aerospace center and thriving, and we have this nice company just down the road that does amazing things, but now you have students who are saying, "Oh, I saw aerospace, but now I see aviation." What is the intersect between that and what are you seeing Angie, when you talk with your peers and seeing students and even your boys, what's top of mind for them when they see the future of learning in STEM?

Angie Sievers: 12:32 Well, I think there's a new opportunity, something that's been dreamt about for years and a number of people in our community I've worked hard for, I don't know, it's been a 30 year effort at least, probably. So there's this ... My children are nine and 11 and a sense of wonder and like, "Oh, well where can we go? Well, what can we do?" Is what they ask.

Susan Hempstead: 12:58 I like that.

Angie Sievers: 12:59 So, certainly the opportunity for students to come here to go to school, it does create ... Then for industry they have better access. So it potentially diversifies industry and we get new opportunities that we didn't have before.
Patrick Pierce: 13:17 If I could add one thing too, I think there's great opportunities to think about the collaboration that can happen with education as well. With WSU Everett coming online, with our community colleges, both Edmonds and Everett have facilities there. You start to think about now how much easier does that collaboration between, it's already occurring with those institutions, with other institutions in our peer cities? What are the other ways that they can start thinking about students and faculty mixing together? Just by reducing the friction there, being, getting back and forth in and out of SeaTac, reducing that friction and having that be easy you're facilitating, just facilitating relationships, whether they're business, whether they're personal, whether they're educational for students and teachers. I just think there's endless number of possibilities there.

Susan Hempstead: 14:02 Ways for connecting.

Patrick Pierce: 14:03 Yes.

Susan Hempstead: 14:03 For the community to connect in a bigger way.

Ken Harvey: 14:05 Yeah, and some of those opportunities, I've seen also include, as you were talking about, learning and education, especially at the community college and university level and vocational technical level. Opportunities to learn some of the advanced manufacturing or technology applications for aerospace. I had an opportunity to chat with two instructors in our local colleges about some of the work they're doing with students to make sure they understand how to essentially build carbon fiber parts for our air fleet in the region.

Patrick Pierce: 14:47 Well, and then you think about Bothell and everything going on there with the life sciences and those are ... Exactly, those are global industries, those rely on selling their products, having suppliers, all of that is really global. Then what we get excited about is how does it start being attractive to folks in the technology sector and in ICT?

Ken Harvey: 15:13 ICT?

Patrick Pierce: 15:13 Information, communication, technology.

Angie Sievers: 15:15 And AI.

Patrick Pierce: 15:16 Yeah.
Ken Harvey: 15:18  Artificial intelligence.

Patrick Pierce: 15:19  Augmented reality. Yes, all these fun acronyms that we have, but if you start thinking about we’re connected regionally to all of these amazing global companies, is they start making calculations and thinking about, well, geez, I’m in Redmond, I’m in Bellevue, I’m in Kirkland, I’m in north Seattle. Yeah, why am I ... Maybe it makes sense to then start connecting to, given that we have this West Coast access now to the Bay Area, to San Diego, to LA, all these different places. Now, maybe it makes sense to go to Paine Field and hey, if Paine Field’s so close, then we’ve got that great asset and our people are living up there, maybe we start thinking about ways to better get engaged within Snohomish County. So we think that there’s some immediate short term benefits in terms of existing businesses but also helping businesses and people recalculate and reconfigure the way they live their lives, the way they do business.

Susan Hempstead: 16:13  That’s planning for the future. That is, how are we thinking? How are we planning? For you Angie, what kind of skill sets are our kids and our students going to need in say, 2040, 2050? What does that pathway pipeline look like of where we will be?

Angie Sievers: 16:31  We think, the traditional approach to linear thinking and systematic application is retired. We’re in a place of, okay, well this isn’t working, so I guess more of a design based thinking or less fixed and more like, okay, it’s okay to fail because I’m going to learn something from it and be able to apply it to a new problem. So how do we set up our young children? It’s a social question too, it’s like, is it okay to fail? And how from a state level, how do we measure their progress when they’re trying, they’re not afraid of failing, but that’s where the real learning happens and creativity starts. They come up with new ideas.

Angie Sievers: 17:17  I came across an article that came out of Stanford University research and they quoted there were two things in 2050 that young adults will need in the workplace. It was interesting. One, first thing was adaptability, because information will be fluid, constant change. The second one was creativity, and the idea around that was, yes, art and foreign language and that thing is important, but being able to connect an idea, like say in healthcare, science and movement. They’re like really different things and we bring them together, the computer or artificial intelligence figures out solution, but we have to come up with connecting those things that computer couldn’t do.

Susan Hempstead: 18:07  The relationship between it. That’s fantastic.
Angie Sievers: 18:10 And how it serves us.

Patrick Pierce: 18:11 I think a continued thing that we hear from employers that's applicable now and into the future is just those soft skills. Those are some of the-

Susan Hempstead: 18:19 How do you get to work? Can you be here on time?

Patrick Pierce: 18:21 Can you relate with other people around you?

Susan Hempstead: 18:23 Can you work on a team?

Patrick Pierce: 18:25 Can you work on a team? So as much as I 100% agree, because that's exactly right, it's going to be adaptability. It's going to be that creativity, but you've got to be able to do that within teams and that might be team sitting around you face to face, or that could be global teams of people all throughout the world. So that cultural competencies and things like that are increasingly important in how you work together in teams throughout the world and throughout the globe.

Ken Harvey: 18:49 We're going to take a break in just a minute, but before we do, Patrick, I also want to go back to something. As you were describing Economic Alliance earlier, Susan used a word in a question to you, that was the word members, and you used the word in a response saying, investors. So I'd like our audience to maybe understand, with Economic Alliance what type of organization are you and what do the words investors and members mean?

Patrick Pierce: 19:21 That's a great ... Okay, we are a nonprofit. We've used the term investor because we really feel like that is what folks that, you could call the members. We are a chamber of commerce and Economic Development Council. I think people know those ideas, but really it's an investment in our community. So while there is membership in terms of you think of a membership where you get direct value for that, we also think that there's that investment comes something higher level, that we're investing in the community. We're investing in these conversations that there are some transactional element to it of, hey, you get this benefit from it, but you're also investing in Snohomish County.

Patrick Pierce: 20:01 You're investing in that vitality. You're investing in the conversations and the activities that we need. Whether that's again, the longterm planning thinking in terms of transportation and infrastructure, whether that's investing in education and
STEM education and the workforce issues. All of those things are work that goes beyond just a simple, that can be defined as a simple member transaction that you think of, but really is investing in the future of Snohomish County.

Susan Hempstead: 20:30 Ken, Sno-Isle Libraries as an investor of Economic Alliance of Snohomish County, we are helping to reach out to entrepreneurs who might be interested in being innovative and starting their own business and they start with us and then we recommend they move on to EASC. As we build civic engagement, they're a critical partnership for us.

Patrick Pierce: 20:52 Yes. Thank you for ... We couldn't do our work without investors like Sno-Isle and when we've had calls to our board in terms of things, in terms of support for the libraries, it's always invigorating to hear that we've got small businesses that have come out of that and that have said, "I absolutely support the libraries and not just for the education or somewhere to take my kids and to be able to enrich them, but from a business standpoint, I came to the library and the foundational things that I did to start my business started as Sno-Isle Libraries. Started there with the research, started with developing a business plan there and the research there." So really the library being that place that breaking those boundaries that traditionally you think of, which is wonderful. Sitting my daughter on my lap, reading a book, those things, fantastic, awesome.

Susan Hempstead: 21:36 Still doing them.

Patrick Pierce: 21:37 Still doing them, but also the things of, it's helping businesses' entrepreneurial efforts within the community. I think that, that's why I love to do this podcast and love to have you guys as investors and I think it's a very fantastic relationship.

Ken Harvey: 21:52 Well, we're glad to have you with us. We're going to take a short break, when we come back we're going to talk a more with Patrick and Angie about some of the workforce recruitment challenges that face the region and what their sense is of what we need to do in this region to make sure that not only do we have a workforce that is ready for the jobs of today, but the ones of tomorrow and Angie talked about 2050 as a date that is coming at us a lot faster than we think. Back in a moment.

Speaker 4: 22:29 Join business people from around the region who are taking advantage of free expert business advice through Business Pros classes from Sno-Isle Libraries. Find a Business Pro class at a
library near you by searching online for events at Sno-Isle Libraries.

Speaker 4: 22:45  We love hearing from our listeners and subscribers, especially if you enjoyed a guest or have a suggestion for a future topic, drop us a line at checkitoutpodcast@sno-isle.org. Again, that's checkitoutpodcast@sno-isle.org and let us know what you're thinking. Don't be surprised if we read your comment or answer your question on a future podcast episode.

Ken Harvey: 23:20  Okay. We're back in the studio with Patrick Pierce and the Angie Sievers. Patrick is the President and CEO of Economic Alliance Snohomish County and Angie is the Director of Snohomish STEM Network and we are just honored .... Susan Hempstead and I are honored .... We went into the break with a question around worker recruitment and I brought that up because I actually heard an economic forecast, an economist recently at an Economic Alliance Snohomish County event, talk about the challenges that our region amongst others, is facing just in terms of finding qualified workers to recruit and employ. And that in fact the concern that we're not generating or have not been generating enough of those, automatically ourselves. So I just wanted to give you an opportunity to weigh in how big of a challenge do you see that being in? What's being brought to bear on this to solve this?

Patrick Pierce: 24:33  Well, if you look at some of the data points, Washington Roundtable did a study a year ago, 740,000 job openings in the state between now and 2020, I believe is the time frame they're looking at. So huge opportunity in terms of jobs available for people. I think our low unemployment has been a challenge. It's generally ... Economists see that as full employment where we're at, sitting somewhere between three and a half and 4% unemployment.

Ken Harvey: 25:00  Which is normally good news.

Patrick Pierce: 25:01  Which is good news, which is fantastic. The challenge is just there then, okay, if you're trying to grow and if you need more workers, how do you find them? So you see that why our population growth continues to grow regionally, we continue to attract people. I think the opportunity with the STEM network and others is there's also a whole lot of young people and other adults, and if you look at some of the programs in terms of engaging folks with different disabilities, those programs, looking into the workforce and finding ways that there's populations that we're not connecting to these jobs. There are, whether that's disadvantaged populations, underserved
populations, all of those, there's an opportunity to get them engaged better in this economy, in this workforce.

Patrick Pierce: 25:50 I think that, that work that's happening in the education system and up throughout there is really beneficial in doing that. I think that's where we're going to find opportunity in the future and really a big focus. Angie, maybe you want to talk about some of that.

Angie Sievers: 26:02 Yeah, I would just add to, Washington Roundtable hired Boston Consulting Group to do a study on students entering our public school system and then six years post graduation, what's happening. What we found is, they used the perfect visual. They used a pipeline and there were drips throughout the process. After the ninth year of school, a considerable number of kids were dropping out. This is in Washington State right here. This was done almost two years ago. So for them to get-

Ken Harvey: 26:37 So drips were not good.

Angie Sievers: 26:40 [crosstalk 00:26:40] So to Patrick's point

Patrick Pierce: 26:41 There's a leaking pipe.

Angie Sievers: 26:42 We have a leaking pipe and to Patrick's point, we have a huge opportunity that, yes, we're focusing on opportunities for those that have a plan beyond high school, but Washington State is focusing very, very acutely on creating career connected learning opportunities, so they see and they're inspired to go into to opportunities that are right here in our state.

Ken Harvey: 27:03 When you say, creating opportunities and they can see, see what?

Angie Sievers: 27:09 See what industry has to offer. There's a huge effort, both certainly it's Snohomish, definitely. All of our regions, our network regions are focused on bringing industry into the classroom. So, it removes barriers for first kids getting to industry after school, transportation, all kinds of things come into play. If we can have these short kind of experimental, they get to do experiment and to talk to someone who's been in the industry for a few years and why they love it. So then it might spark an interest and then we create another opportunity that links them. The network's goal is to create this string of opportunities.
Angie Sievers: 27:54 So when a student finds interest in something, there's something to go to next, whether it be in school, maybe it's after-school activities through Boys & Girls Club or YMCA or whatever. There's all kinds of ways, but making it very clear for students and parents.

Susan Hempstead: 28:10 Well, and that's tricky because you get exposure as a student. My son, Nate is in as high school robotics team and he doesn't necessarily know how that translates into a potential profession occupation at the end of his education. He just knows he has this affinity for creating, tinkering, brainstorming, planning, executing, but how does that translate? So is that what industry is helping to show to students?

Angie Sievers: 28:37 Well, I think that specific example and also what does a certificate or a degree translate to me? I think that it's assumed that we know, but we start talking to parents and kids, they don't know.

Susan Hempstead: 28:50 They don't know.

Angie Sievers: 28:51 Like what can I do with this? Well, let's talk about it. There are a number of career exploration tools and I could see ... If our state were to look at statewide whether students in A district or Z district, it follows them so that they've explored certain areas that don't work for them and they are making progress towards finding what they really love to do.

Patrick Pierce: 29:15 Something about the leaky pipe. I think the opportunity there is, well, we have slightly better than average graduation rate countywide. There's variation between districts, but call it 80%, that still means one in five kids are dropping out of K12. A lot of these jobs, not exclusively, requires something, a high school diploma, maybe some training afterwards, a lot of those to get in. So to start as a starting point, how do we inspire them to get past that hurdle? Then the industry piece as well is inspiring both in seeing what you can do, but the economic realities of, hey, I might start at, call it 15 to 20 dollars an hour, but if I stick with the job for a year, 18 months, a lot of those jobs in manufacturing and other places are leading to doubling that.

Patrick Pierce: 30:08 So you're making $60,000 at the age of 20, if you can come out of high school, have a skill and be able to stick with something, which is where those soft skills I think start to come into play. So making some of those opportunities available and raising the visibility of those. I think that some of the programs at core plus and others like that connected to career connected learning are great ways of doing that. Last, I think would be that message
that just because you go that path, that doesn't mean that, that's a dead end. That just because you didn't go to college right out of high school that you can never go to college.

Patrick Pierce:  30:42  I'll use my little brother as ... He got out, didn't know what he was doing, he ended up going and getting an associates. Now he's been working at Boeing for 12 years. He'll finish in this next year his bachelor's, he'll be 30. So-

Susan Hempstead:  30:54  Good for him.

Ken Harvey:  30:54  Yeah, that's great.

Patrick Pierce:  30:55  There's an opportunity there to say that, hey, you can find that path, just because you don't know what you want to do right out of high school, it doesn't mean that you can't continue to progress and grow as a person as you continue throughout your career. That's a stigma I think that we have, that if you don't go to college, even whether it's community or for four year right out of high school that you've somehow missed the mark. It's really ... Sometimes people take a little longer to find themselves, find their path, find out where they're going and you still have that chance to do it. It still takes a lot of hard work to get out there and do it and make it happen [inaudible 00:31:26], but if you're determined to do it, you can do it at 30. You can do it at 40. You can do it at 60.

Ken Harvey:  31:31  Well, congratulations to your brother.

Patrick Pierce:  31:33  Yeah.

Ken Harvey:  31:33  Angie, Patrick just used a couple of phrases or names of things and I'm thinking maybe you can help explain to the audience what they meant. I think he said something about core connect or core plus-

Angie Sievers:  31:46  Core plus career connected learning.

Ken Harvey:  31:50  Career connected learning. Can you tell us a little bit more about what that means and what's your finding in terms of how essentially the marketplace is responding to you and the STEM network?

Angie Sievers:  32:03  Core plus is a model that, the first ... It's a two year model. The first year is broad and experience and then it has multiple pathways. A student takes a number of classes, does a number of projects and then they identify a certain area they want to go
into. An example is the AJAC program at Everett Community College. They use core plus in their aviation studies. I can't think off the top of my head, there's like three or four different pathways, but they have options and they can get multiple certificates through that model.

Ken Harvey: 32:40 Wow.

Susan Hempstead: 32:41 So really it sounds like it's connecting business students, education partners in developing this innovative opportunities to connect students and introduce them to these opportunities and ideas.

Angie Sievers: 32:54 Also, that first year is ... Earlier Patrick was speaking to, being able to collaborate. So, if you're a mechanical engineer and I'm an electrical engineer, I get a little bit about what you do so that we can-

Susan Hempstead: 33:07 Get grounded.

Angie Sievers: 33:07 Yeah. So that it offers that foundation.

Susan Hempstead: 33:12 I am super excited and I bet you have people all the time who are excited to offer to help. What can I do? What can I do? How are you and your partners at the Snohomish STEM Network harnessing all of this energy to be involved and help and what can we do?

Angie Sievers: 33:27 We're blessed to have, two very active boards and there are a lot of great ideas. We're in the process of, of really focusing in on what we're going to attack and tackle and make a difference in the next six months, but also look at two years out, what do we want to accomplish?

Angie Sievers: 33:48 I would say, at the high school level, just creating access for students that are already interested in the area, to further explore and from a junior high, high school, point of view, just letting them ... There's a ton of opportunities. I think students and parents don't know how to access that information or find out what's going on, and I think the network is a great convener of that. We can highlight different things that are going on in our community and connect the dots. Then there's a great movement in the early learning space as well around math and reading literacy. Absolutely.

Susan Hempstead: 34:31 Well, count the librarian as your partner.
Angie Sievers:  34:34 Absolutely.

Susan Hempstead:  34:34 We want to help people get loud for libraries and loud for STEM. Our local librarians are working on early literacy. We have our teen librarians who are working on after-school STEM programming. So we are hopefully you see us as a partner of both Economic Alliance and Snohomish STEM Network. Strong partner.

Angie Sievers:  34:54 Oh, thank you.

Ken Harvey:  34:56 I think that it can be incredibly exciting to think about ... I'm thinking about what you mentioned about 2050 and be thinking 20 years, 30 years into the future and trying to imagine the types of jobs that will be available then. And then thinking, especially when I consider what I'm hearing sometimes in the news and sometimes the fake news around artificial intelligence and augmented reality and virtual realities and kind of the march of technology that can seem really exciting in terms of the opportunities. You can also feel some ways frightening. Especially if I'm currently a worker in the workforce and I'm thinking I'm not trained to do any of that stuff and who's going to train me, what do I do? Or I'm maybe a high schooler and I'm like, I don't even know what to prepare for it because I'm not sure what the jobs are going to be when I get out there.

Ken Harvey:  36:01 What are you seeing in terms of how the collaboration is happening between educational institutions and the K through 12 and industry and economic development to make sure that we're really guiding, helping to guide where the preparation of the workforce for tomorrow's jobs?

Susan Hempstead:  36:23 Great question.

Patrick Pierce:  36:23 Well, there are ... I think we are blessed in this community to have especially at the community college level, they've been very responsive to industry in terms of the programs that they have developed to really look at that and certainly meet the needs of today. But I think if you look at the ... Take some of the mechatronics work, that's really that looking at how you start to repair and be the operators of automated systems is a great way to look into the future and say, there is going to be automation that comes that makes sense and it oftentimes is actually better for the employees not having to do those jobs. But again, robots need to be worked on. They need to be repaired, they need to be programmed.
Susan Hempstead: 37:07  Upgraded.

Patrick Pierce: 37:07  Yeah, they need to be upgraded, all those things. So it's not stagnant and I've heard anecdotally that some of those ... A lot of that automation where people think that jobs are disappearing, it's just creating different kinds of jobs. So again, to the adaptability, to the creativity, how do you make sure that you be curious how do you make sure that you can pivot and take your skills and the knowledge that you have and then apply that to something different as your job changes? If you can be adaptable like that, then I think you will continue to have success. How we teach that to people, that adaptability, I think is probably for people smarter than I am, but I think that, that's key in terms of that preparation there.

Patrick Pierce: 37:47  I think that, having resources, like it's great to have University of Washington, Bothell and have WSU Everett in our community, because those are where some of these, again, these high level ideas are going to spur and their commitment to being connected to employers in delivering on students and moving and adapting to them is, I think super important. If you look at the STEM school at U-dub at Bothell, WSU, being where they focused in software engineering, mechanical engineering and electrical engineering is their core focus. So that's where as you see innovation coming, that's where that secret sauce is because that's all those disciplines coming together and everything that we use today.

Susan Hempstead: 38:29  That adaptability is so important and we see that every day in the library. People are coming in to choose what they want to learn today. What am I interested today? So it's fantastic opportunity.

Patrick Pierce: 38:40  And there are some efforts at the state level around future workforce and we've been working close with Workforce Snohomish, which is our workforce development council here and there's some work together as well on that. Employer Roundtable that happened last year and some additional work going forward and really looking at how we prepare ourselves as a community for what's coming next.

Ken Harvey: 39:04  Well, Patrick, I think it was a couple of years ago, you showed up at a library grand opening event with two little ones I think in tow. It was incredible for us to see you in that setting with family members and we were glad to have you. It seems that there is this ongoing interaction that is happening between the library as a member of the community and the region and Economic Alliance as, in some ways owning the effort, helping
to marshal the effort to make sure that the region continues to be competitive globally and and just vibrant, that great place to live, work and play. What do you see as the libraries ... Well, let me go back to the event. Why did you make the effort to come out with your daughters?

Patrick Pierce: 40:10

Well, on a personal level, they love the library, especially my youngest and my oldest. When she wasn't in school, that was a place that we would convene. Speaking of adaptability, I would commend Sno-Isle for your effort to be adaptable, your effort to see that being what people thought of this library is not the model of the future, that you're going to have to continue to innovate and be adaptable and change to the market and be more of that community. Not where you just go to check out books, or videos and things like that, but really have a larger role in terms of that community fabric. So the conversations that you are all [inaudible 00:40:51] in this podcast, I think ... All these things I think really commend you for that.

Patrick Pierce: 40:55

So from a personal standpoint, it was being a part of that. It's a place that our kids love because it's somewhere that they want to learn and something we've personally taken a lot of responsibility and that you got to take that time to read to your kids, to engage your kids. That's how you can best set them up for success as they move forward. On a professional level, it's really just about, like I said, I know that our businesses ... When I've got businesses owners coming to me saying, "The library was part of my success. That's how we got started." When I look at being in the neighborhood with the Mariner Library and you were neighbors.

Susan Hempstead: 41:29

We are neighbors.

Patrick Pierce: 41:29

We're part of that community and really I think the effort's there to create that community space and grow that and look at those needs of that community and being a part of that, as much as we talk about industry and these big picture ideas, there's a lot of that work in terms of that placemaking within our own communities that live, work, play. If we're not spending the time in our own community to figure out how we make that a great place to be, then we're not going to be as effective in terms of recruiting and trying to bring new businesses in and keep businesses if they're not happy with .... If they don't see that as a vibrant place that they want to be.

Patrick Pierce: 42:04

So I think that partnership's continue to go on and I can't wait to see all the great things under your new executive director's leadership in terms of where the library goes. But I'm very
confident that it's going to be great things and we're going to continue to have a fantastic partnership here.

Susan Hempstead: 42:20 Libraries' about inquiry and discovery, and how can we learn more and curate the community so to speak and learn about what's important to you and how can we help and not as in previous years, wait for you to come to our house and sit behind the desk and offer how may I respond to your question, but how can I anticipate, how can I delight? How can I serve? Our librarians are doing extraordinary work in their community connections and developing amazing innovative partnerships for early literacy, math, literacy, and how do we help be part of that community fabric and the priorities.

Patrick Pierce: 42:58 That partnership ... Your former executive, Jonalyn, was a co-chair of our strategic planning process, in terms of developing our five year strategic plan, working with business leaders. So stepping up and being a part of that and having ... That's not a position I think you'll see in other communities, the library stepping into that space and saying, "I'm on an economic development board, I'm going to engage. I'm not only just going to show up to the meeting, I'm going to actually roll up my sleeves and be part of setting the priorities going forward." It was a fantastic process and I think that plan was, I think our organization's successes. Again, part of has benefited from the partnership with Sno-Isle Libraries.

Ken Harvey: 43:40 In the final minute or two that we've got for the podcast, Angie, I want to just ask you, what would you like to really leave with the audience in terms of what you see as the promise and the outcome of the work that you're involved in.

Angie Sievers: 43:58 Inspiration. I think coming to the library to find what you're curious about, but you also find three or four other things that you didn't even think about. What do you do with that? The network, the Snohomish STEM Network is a convener of all those resources from government, to nonprofit, to urban centers, to rural. And just how do we all live and play and experience what Snohomish County has to offer.

Angie Sievers: 44:30 One example of that, specifically, if you don't mind if I share, we recently received a Boeing grant where we're focused on a real community. We're working with a school district to bring multiple industries into an eighth grade classroom and the following year they'll get to go get on a bus and go experience an industry outside of the school.

Susan Hempstead: 44:51 That's exciting.
Angie Sievers: 44:54 We haven't focused as always, so it's just really about creating increased access and curiosity and giving people options for what they're interested in doing and learning about.

Ken Harvey: 45:09 That's inspiring.

Patrick Pierce: 45:10 It is, and that's often what it is about. If you think about a lot of, even thinking about my own experience, you grew up in one setting and you see a certain lens, which you see the world. The more that we can give kids the opportunity to expand their horizons and just see those, because they might not even know that those things exist. They might not know that those options are available to them. So by broadening those in those young years, then you, I think you're just opening up and creating endless possibilities for them that were always there, but if you don't know they're there then you can't put them into where your goals are and what you're experiencing, what you're shooting for.

Susan Hempstead: 45:49 Well, both of you are doing amazing work. This is a big county, a lot of people, a lot of children, a lot of workers in their mid career and we're going to keep growing. So how do we set that pathway to provide support, coaching, counseling, and really some career connected opportunities to make those dreams happen. Thanks for joining us today.

Angie Sievers: 46:14 [crosstalk 00:46:14]. Thanks for having us

Ken Harvey: 46:15 This has been fantastic.

Patrick Pierce: 46:16 Absolutely. Thank you.

Ken Harvey: 46:27 Boy, that was really neat to have Patrick and Angie here with us in the studio talking about economic development and the STEM, the work around the STEM network.

Susan Hempstead: 46:37 We are so fortunate to have them as leaders in our community convening and connecting and guiding all of us on this journey of what is STEM, how do our organizations help get the word out and how do we move past these micro moments of where we are today to think about what is the workforce of the future, what skills and competencies do students need to have when we get to say, 2050? What does that look like?

Ken Harvey: 47:07 I totally was fascinated by that conversation, because I know that when my son was coming through middle school and then senior high school, he really struggled trying to figure out what
it was he wanted to do with his life and whether he should go to college or not, or take a vocation. One of the things that he was really concerned about was that ... Two things, he might not like what he chose and so he's afraid that he might end up in a dead end for him, in terms of what he enjoyed doing. He was also concerned that what he's studied for might not even exist, there might not be a demand for it after a few years. So, I'm really appreciative of Angie's work to help really connect students with the opportunities and help them be more aware of what's going to be available.

Susan Hempstead: 48:05 And that connection that's so important that the work of the Snohomish STEM Network resides with the Economic Alliance of Snohomish County. That it's the voice of industry, it's the voice of education, it's the voice of our partners. And is we're looking ahead, how do we allow for everyone to be on the spectrum, the STEM spectrum of science, technology, engineering and math, but that also means marine biology. It means I could be a veterinarian. I think that, that spectrum is so broad that it allows for a lot of opportunity.

Ken Harvey: 48:43 Well, one of the things that I'm not sure that we actually even got deeply into, but as Patrick was talking about Economic Alliance as an organization and he was explaining what he meant by investors or members or whatever. Boy, there are a lot of different types of organizations that are part of this alliance and it's pretty impressive.

Susan Hempstead: 49:08 It's extraordinary and I think as he mentioned, they are a convener. They are the platform to start from. Our county is so rich and so diverse, we get to see it every day as a library district. Patrick and Angie get to see it as our partners on that broad level of, what are the priorities across Snohomish County? With so many school district partners, how can we help everyone have a sense of opportunity for their students and for their businesses and their organizations? It's an awesome job and I'm glad that they're leading the effort for us to join.

Ken Harvey: 49:47 Well, I was also just really struck by, I think the passion that both of them bring to their respective positions. Essentially they're both pretty local. They've got roots here in this region and they both understand how critical it is that we not just assume that the good economic times that we currently enjoy as a region, that those automatically continue will continue to happen, going on into the future. That in fact, we're responsible today to do the things that will ensure that, the vibrancy and the good economy that we experience, the quality of life that
we enjoy. That, that will continue based upon the things we choose to do today.

Susan Hempstead: 50:36 Right. We don’t want our talent and our workforce and our students to have to be exported to other places to find a job. We want this region to have affordability, so if someone chooses a particular profession, they can afford their home, they can afford to live in this region. So absolutely, for all of those reasons, the work they’re doing is critically important.

Ken Harvey: 50:58 What did you think about what Patrick mentioned in terms of ... I think he talked about that this report that had come out that indicated there were like 700 and some thousand new jobs, but that they couldn’t all be filled because we just don’t have enough individuals in the region who are ready to step into those. What did you think about that?

Susan Hempstead: 51:20 I think that is a key issue that our community college partners and our higher ed partners are working on every day. How many seats do you have in your organization to offer students the opportunity to pursue the career, the pathway of the certification that they’re looking to do? If we don’t have the resources to offer those seats, those positions often go unfilled. Someone who has a passion in a particular area either needs to defer, delay or transition to another field for a while. So I think the work that we’re doing at Sno-Isle Libraries partnering with our work source, workforce, Economic Alliance of Snohomish County, our higher education partners, our community college partners, really trying to meet people where they are and find opportunities to help expand ... What do they call it? The art of the possible, to make sure everyone can achieve their learning dream.

Ken Harvey: 52:15 Well, I think, if I had any regret from the conversation that we had with Angie and Patrick, it was really around not spending some time talking about the role of Economic Alliance in really enabling the region to speak with one voice.


Ken Harvey: 52:36 I know that one of the things and where they speak, to what groups they’re speaking to who need to hear that this is a place that people ought to come and locate their businesses or locate in, because I know that I was fascinated a number of years ago to discover that Economic Alliance was present, had a presence at some international air shows and things where they were going out to where, aerospace was doing its thing and showing
off the new and best stuff that they had coming off assembly lines-

Susan Hempstead: 53:16 That's occurring here in Snohomish County.

Ken Harvey: 53:17 That's occurring here, well, and showing how that stuff is happening here and therefore you ought to-

Susan Hempstead: 53:23 Be here too.

Ken Harvey: 53:24 Be here too. If you're a company that is supplying, or coming up with parts for that type of industry, you ought to come here. I thought, man, I think that is just so great that we've got a group like Economic Alliance that's out there essentially representing us to the world in the places where leaders are gathering and that helps inform decisions that they're making in terms of where they're going to invest their dollars.

Susan Hempstead: 53:54 And it ultimately ends up showcasing for us who live and work in Snohomish County to remind us that there are wonderful things happening so that when we go to schools or we're talking with our children or the work that Angie's doing, convening with industry partners, we know what's occurring. That builds excitement and that builds interest. And at libraries we build curiosity, and people can explore different career pathways. That's so exciting because there's so many wonderful and innovative activities occurring in our county right now.

Ken Harvey: 54:28 Well, we have been very fortunate as an organization to have been part of Economic Alliance from its genesis. I know that we have enjoyed the opportunity to really collaborate and work to be part of the effort that is helping to ensure that the region remains successful and vibrant. I think that ... I hope that members of our audience and listening to this interview can walk away feeling like, gosh, there is ... With a sense of reassurance that there are individuals who are out there and organizations like Economic Alliance that are looking ahead and saying, okay, we're not just going to assume that things will remain as good as they are, we're going to help make sure that they do or even better.

Susan Hempstead: 55:27 That's what I was going to say. There's reassurance, but there's also excitement about the current activities and planning and opportunities that are within our county right now and what the knock on, hopefully we are not soon to our next recession, but should we be, there's been some very thoughtful and careful planning into how we help people transition careers and pay
attention to these 700,000 jobs that could be their next opportunity.

Ken Harvey: 55:58  Well, thanks again to Patrick Pierce and Angie Sievers, doing a great job working on behalf of the industries and the institutions and the residents of our region and Sno-Isle Libraries is really proud to be a partner with them.

Susan Hempstead: 56:16  Absolutely.

Speaker 4: 56:17  If you enjoy this podcast, please subscribe so you can receive every year episode automatically, and until next time, remember your library has a lot to offer you, so what are you waiting for? Check it out.