According to Cameron Evans, Microsoft’s U.S. Education Chief Technology Offer, on any given day the corporation has 8,000 vacant jobs due to the lack of a skilled workforce. These are not highly technical jobs but those that can’t be filled by recent graduates due to the skills gap especially in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

During the Policy Academy on Digital Learning and STEM Opportunities at the CSG National Conference, policymakers learned innovative practices and state approaches to advance STEM education and open the world of technology to all students. No one will argue that technology is drastically changing our world but it's also increasingly changing daily practice in classrooms all across the country.

Daniele Massey, 2013 Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Teacher of the Year noted “If you came into my classroom at lunch you’d think the students should be eating. They were. They were eating and learning. When you engage students they want more; they want to learn.”

A team of education professionals from the Canby School District in Oregon shared their strategies using technology as an instructional and learning tool. “The only box is the one we’ve created,” said Joe Morelock, director of technology and innovation. “We’re all working hard. We need to work differently,” he said.

As a suggestion to the policymakers in the audience Morelock said, “Mandating doesn’t work. Set the vision from the top and allow the grassroots efforts to grow and decide what works best.”

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