

NEWS RELEASE

March 6, 2014

Let's Talk Science and Local Industry Underscore Importance of STEM Learning at Board of Trade Luncheon

St. John's, NL – Science and technology are increasingly important to Canada's and Newfoundland and Labrador's economic well-being and quality of life. The President of Let's Talk Science, Bonnie Schmidt, Ph.D., was in St. John's this week to again highlight a 2013 study titled *Spotlight on Science Learning: The High Cost of Dropping Science and Math*, which outlines how important science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) is for students when looking for long-term economic and personal success.

"Newfoundland and Labrador is experiencing a period of unprecedented growth and opportunity," said Dr. Schmidt. "Jobs will require a balance of analytical skills, an understanding of science and technology and a great deal of creativity. Encouraging students to graduate with a broad, balanced secondary school education – which includes science, math, and technology courses – will keep their options open, increase their opportunities in job markets of the future and optimally prepare them for the life-long learning required in a changing province. Today, Jamie Long of Hibernia and I highlighted this very important message to the local business community, and in turn we hope that the message will get to parents, educators and students. Newfoundland and Labrador's future depends on it."

Spotlight on Science Learning: The High Cost of Dropping Science and Math is the latest research report from Let's Talk Science. The research reveals that the economic impact of dropping science, technology and math courses in high school is costing Canada much more than anticipated. From the financial costs associated with making up lost courses, to the opportunity costs associated with lost future earnings, to the societal costs associated with reduced innovation in Canada and unfilled jobs due to incompatible skills - we all lose when science, technology and math education is not pursued.

"The current energy industry outlook is extremely positive for Newfoundland and Labrador and is a key reason why Hibernia is supporting innovative programs to build capacity in science, technology, engineering and math in Newfoundland and Labrador youth," said Dr. Schmidt. "Let's Talk Science's research reveals the financial and lost opportunity costs when youth turn away from STEM education and explains the importance of engaging youth to develop skills that align with careers in the Newfoundland and Labrador economy and the lucrative energy industry in particular."



The report and Dr. Schmidt's speech to the St. John's Board of Trade today, explained that it will take a concerted effort by all stakeholders – educators at all levels, parents, youth, industry, government and non-profit organizations – to engage youth in STEM learning for future prosperity. Seventy per cent of Canada's top jobs of the future require STEM learning. Everyone needs to engage students in STEM earlier and make it fun and relevant to their present and future lives.

"We need to engage students in STEM earlier and make it fun and relevant to their present and future lives," noted Dr. Schmidt. "I encourage Newfoundland and Labrador to continue being a leader in this regard and continue offering a curriculum that inspires. HMDC provided Let's Talk Science with almost \$2 million in funding enabling us to really focus on programming and awareness in this province."

A digital copy of *Spotlight on Science Learning: The High Cost of Dropping Science and Math* is located at <http://www.letstalkscience.ca/our-research/spotlight2013.html>.

Let's Talk Science is an award-winning, national, charitable organization, founded by Bonnie Schmidt, Ph.D. It creates and delivers unique learning programs and services that engage children, youth and educators in science, technology, engineering and math.

-30-