

There is a growing trend in education to make schools look like great beacons of opportunity, opportunities which are a fast track to college prep, college course credits, higher standardized test scores, and jobs. After jobs, then what? Well, as it turns out, advocates of this educational paradigm aren't claiming to know *that*. Parents, educators, politicians, pastors, corporations, and students alike are pumping out and consuming this Kool-Aid at record numbers. Enter the latest movement toward magnet programs and STEM. Are these schools successful? If educational success is measured by four-year college degrees, job placement, and higher standardized tests, then these magnet and STEM programs are mediocre at best. For real data on this, see the last few pages in *Classical Christian Education: An Introduction*. Without spending too much time here, there needs to be a few things said about what should take the place of STEM-centered education.

If STEM is Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, then STEM is a concentration on the pragmatic arts. These are not only the least important academic disciplines for forming good students and good citizens, but when separated from what are called the liberal arts, they are harmful. So, let's keep with the acronyms. The antidote to any STEM curriculum, which builds neither a deep nor wide educational foundation, is PHALL. All STEMs must PHALL.

**Philosophy.** Science, bereft of a clear-headed and abiding consideration of the three branches of philosophy (ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology), leads not to knowledge but confusion.

**Art.** Technology, which doesn't consider the artistry or cultural implications of it all, makes man into a machine, a dispensable part in the production.

**Literature.** Engineering, practiced in a void of good narrative and ignorant of story, creates a world of master manipulators, cleverer than our forefathers at moving molecules around the earth. And for what? We don't know. That's for the philosophers, right?

**Love.** Mathematical deduction, without a proper understanding of man's affections, comes to unsound and wicked conclusions. We may ship more goods across the world, but we won't be equipped to determine if that's actually *good* or not.

If we STEM a generation, let's not be surprised at the rotten fruit.