Idaho STEM School Designation
Application Requirements

This document outlines the high-level application requirements for an eligible public school or public school program (STEM program) seeking to be awarded an Idaho STEM School Designation by the Idaho State Board of Education pursuant to Section 33-4701, Idaho Code. In compliance with this framework, Idaho STEM Action Center will develop internal policies, procedures, and processes for reviewing such applications and recommending STEM programs annually to the Idaho State Board of Education for formal designation.

I. Annual Application Cycle

1. **INTENT NOTIFICATION**

   Deadline: On or Before May 31st of School Year PRIOR to the Review School Year

   - STEM programs hoping to become designated or renew their designation will notify Idaho STEM Action Center by May 31 of the school/fiscal year <u>prior</u> to the year they hope to be reviewed/approved in (their review school year).

2. **PORTFOLIO BUILDING & STEM PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT**

   Targeted Timeframe: Summer/Fall of Review School Year

   - Idaho STEM Action Center will provide the STEM program seeking designation access to an online platform to upload their application materials (as outlined in Section III of this document).
   - These application materials will constitute a "review portfolio" by which Idaho STEM Action Center will assess the STEM program's success in implementing the State Board-approved Idaho Standards for STEM School Designation.
   - As the STEM Program builds its review portfolio, it will perform a self-assessment of the portfolio utilizing the review criteria developed and published by the Idaho STEM Action Center. This self-assessment will be submitted to the Idaho STEM Action Center as part of the application process.

3. **PORTFOLIO READINESS CHECK**

   Targeted Timeframe: End of Fall/Early Winter of Review School Year

   - Idaho STEM Action Center will do perform a high-level check of the STEM program's review portfolio and self-assessment to ensure it is complete and appears sufficiently developed to warrant formal review.
   - If ready, a review team will be assembled (as outlined in Section II of this document) and an on-site visit will be scheduled with the STEM Program.
   - If the portfolio is deemed incomplete or obviously not-ready, formative feedback will be issued by the Idaho STEM Action Center. The STEM program will need to delay review until feedback can be implemented and/or necessary adjustments can be made.

4. **DESK REVIEW & ON-SITE VISIT**

   <u>Targeted Timeframe:</u> **Late Winter/Early Spring of Review School Year**

   - The review team will perform a desk review of the review portfolio to identify areas of interest, gaps in evidence, or questions that may still need clarified during the on-site visit.

   - Basic feedback from the desk review will be given to the STEM program to provide a preparation focus for the review team's on-site visit.

   - The on-site visit will occur, and the review team will determine an overall recommendation for/against designation in accordance with the State Board-approved Idaho Standards of STEM School Designation and the related review criteria developed and published by the Idaho STEM Action Center.

5. **IDAHO STEM ACTION CENTER RECOMMENDATION**

   <u>Targeted Timeframe:</u> **Mid-to-Late March of Review School Year**

   - Idaho STEM Action Center will prepare a final report summarizing the review team's findings and official recommendation regarding the STEM program's application.

6. **IDAHO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DESIGNATION**

   <u>Deadline:</u> **April of Review School Year, Regular Meeting of Idaho State Board of Education**

   - Idaho STEM Action Center will bring the approved recommendations to the Idaho State Board of Education for official designation.

   - Awarded designations will be good for 5 full school years (pursuant Idaho Code § 33-4701), beginning when school starts in the coming Fall. However, a STEM program may publicly announce themselves as having achieved Idaho STEM Designation as soon as the Idaho State Board of Education votes to officially approve their designation.

7. **IDAHO STEM ACTION CENTER AGREEMENT & AWARD EXECUTION**

   <u>Deadline:</u> **By May 31 of Review School Year**

   - Idaho STEM Action Center will work with the STEM program's administrative/financial team to execute an agreement for the following school year, which will be renewable for up to the 5 years of designation.

   - The agreement will entitle the STEM program to ongoing public recognition, financial support, and professional development resources from Idaho STEM Action Center (as allowed by available and appropriated funds).

   - Under the agreement, the STEM program will be required to execute their submitted *Plan for STEM implementation* to the best of their ability and provide the Idaho STEM Action Center with any reasonable and appropriate data related to the implementation of Idaho Code § 33-4701, the State Board-approved Idaho Standards for STEM School Designation, or Idaho STEM Action Center fiscal reporting requirements.

   - Failure to comply with the above requirements may, at the discretion of the Idaho STEM Action Center, result in a revocation of the benefits associated Idaho STEM Designation.

II. Required Review Team Composition

The review team will be composed of 5 individuals as described below:

- **1 staff representative from the Idaho STEM Action Center** (who shall be familiar with the STEM Designation process and capable of leading and training the review team)

- **1 staff representative from the Idaho State Department of Education** (who shall have relevant expertise in STEM-related K-12 instruction, assessment, and/or educational program evaluation)

- **1 staff representative from the Idaho Division of Career Technical Education** (who shall have relevant expertise in STEM-related K-12 CTE instruction, college & career readiness education, and/or educational program evaluation)

  - For reviews of STEM programs that exclusively serve elementary students, the applying STEM program may request that an alternative representative take this slot in place of a representative from the Idaho Division of Career Technical Education. In such cases, the Idaho STEM Action Center will fill this slot with an appropriate individual from one of the other groups identified in this section.

- **1 certified staff member representing the leadership team of a current STEM-designated program or school** (strong preference given to individuals who hold a current Teacher Leader and/or Administrator endorsements).

- **1 representative from a STEM-related industry, professional community, or higher-education partner** (who shall have relevant background, training, and/or substantial experience engaging with youth STEM programs and/or K-12 education) will also serve.

  - If an appropriate industry, professional community, or higher-education partner is not reasonably available to participate on the review team, the 5th member may be an additional individual from any of the groups listed above.

Exceptional Circumstances: Should exceptional circumstances necessitate it, a STEM Designation review may be conducted with fewer than 5 individuals serving on the review team, or without membership from one of the required groups listed above.

However, this exception must be approved by both the Executive Director of the Idaho STEM Action Center and the leadership team of the program being evaluated prior to the start of the desk review.

- The reason for the exception must be explicitly documented in the review team's final report and cited in the recommendations provided by the Idaho STEM Action Center to the Idaho State Board of Education.

Conflicts of Interest: All members of the review team must be free of any interests, commitments, or personal relationships that could reasonably affect their ability to evaluate the STEM program and it's provided portfolio in an impartial and objective manner.

III. Required Review Submissions

As part of their application, all STEM programs will be required to submit a review portfolio that includes the items described in this section. The review team will assess the review portfolio utilizing the criteria and processes established and published by the Idaho STEM Action Center in alignment with the State Board-adopted Idaho Standards for STEM School Designation. Definitions and descriptions for each required item in the portfolio submission are also provided below.

Review Submission Definitions

Artifact: A document, file, record, picture, video, or other piece of media (or a related and intentionally curated collection of such) submitted as a single, cohesive unit to serve as evidence of meeting some aspect of a standard.

- If multiple files or documents are meant to work together in support of a single claim or to demonstrate the same aspect of a given standard, they should be submitted together as a collection, serving as a single artifact.

Narrative: A persuasively written statement intended to make a compelling case for how a program is meeting a given standard and to provide specific context for how each submitted artifact supports that case.

- An effective narrative will intentionally address each submitted artifact. It will also draw specific connections between the artifacts and the related standard's rubric descriptors.

- The goal of the narrative is to make it indisputably clear to the review team that the standard is being met and that sufficient evidence has been provided to support that claim. It is recommended to be extremely explicit and leave as little up to interpretation by the review team as possible. In the absence of solid evidence for an aspect of a standard (either from artifacts or the on-site review), the review team will be forced to assume that there is no supporting evidence that aspect and score accordingly.

Portfolio: The organized collection of narratives, artifacts, and additional information assembled by a program to demonstrate that they are meeting the requirements laid out in Idaho Code § 33-4701 and each of the nine (9) State Board-approved Idaho Standards for STEM School Designation. This portfolio will be collected via an online, digital portal and assessed by the review team as part of an official STEM Designation Review led by the Idaho STEM Action Center.

- Contributions to the portfolio can (and, ideally, should) come from all staff within a program, but it is the responsibility of the program's STEM leadership team to assemble the portfolio.

- The portfolio will be considered by the review team, alongside evidence gathered during the on-site visit, to determine the final recommendation regarding STEM Designation.

Review Portfolio Submission Requirements

Plan for STEM Implementation / Program Strategic Plan – Pursuant Idaho Code § 33-4701(3)(c), all programs applying for Idaho STEM Designation must "adopt a plan of STEM implementation that includes, but is not limited to, how the school and district integrate proven best practices into non-

STEM courses and practices and how lessons learned are shared with other schools within the district and throughout the state."

- The exact structure and length of this document is left to the discretion of program leadership. However, it should at a minimum include:

  1. A statement of the program's mission and values/philosophy

  2. Specific goals for the next 5 years, related to the implementation of STEM program-wide and the integration of STEM best practices into traditionally non-STEM areas.

  3. A plan of action articulating how the program will work towards accomplishing those goals and share their successes/lessons learned with other programs over the next 5 years.

  4. Information on how and when this plan was formally adopted by program, school, and/or district leadership.

- So long as the above items are fully addressed, this requirement may be met through the submission of an existing school or district planning document. There is no expectation that a unique document be created specifically for achieving STEM designation if all the information already exists within another official document prepared by/for the program.

In addition, for <u>each</u> of the nine Idaho Standards for STEM School Designation, a program must submit the following to the Idaho STEM Action Center for formal consideration by the review team:

One (1) Narrative – 100 words minimum, 500 words maximum

- The narrative should address any aspect of the standard not explicitly demonstrated by the submitted artifacts for that standard and articulate how relevant evidence may be gathered during the on-site visit.

Three (3) to Six (6) Artifacts – The total collection of artifacts for a given standard should ideally attempt to address all aspects of that standard.

- At least one (1) artifact must come from the review school year, with the intention of demonstrating current performance.

- At least one (1) artifact must come from the two (2) years preceding the review school year, with the intention of demonstrating consistency and/or growth over time.

- Although it is a separate submission requirement (detailed above), the program's *Plan for STEM Implementation*—or a subsection of said plan—may serve as an artifact for any/all of the standards (if noted appropriately in the STEM program's review portfolio).