



STEM Action Center

Board Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2025 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Workforce Development Council Conference Room

Board Members Present: Ed Atienza, Steve Christiansen, Jennifer Jackson, Jake Reynolds, Michelle Clement Taylor(subbing for Allison Duman), Linda Clark, Erin Simms, Jani Revier

Board Members Absent:

Staff Present: Wendi Secrist, Francine McGrew, Dee Mooney, Katie Bosch-Wilson, Meliah Anchustegui, Matt Thompson

Call to Order and Introductions

Jenn called the meeting to order at 1:31 pm.

Review of Board Meeting Minutes

Linda moved to approve the minutes of November 8, 2024. Steve seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Review of STEM AC Financials

Dee welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave everyone the opportunity to introduce themselves. Dee kicked off the Financials section with an overview of FY2025 expenditures and revenue. She noted that revenue coming into the dedicated fund are split between donations from other state agencies as well as industry. Linda Clark asked if there was a goal for revenues coming in. Dee and Francine stated that the baseline realistic goal of \$235,000. Linda asked if there was a percentage goal based on where donations are coming from, and Francine stated that there currently is not an outline of percentage donations by type. Dee stated that the goals were formulated based on revenue received in the past.

Dee reviewed that Strategic Plan Goals which are:

1. Increase awareness of importance of STEM + CS education and employment
2. Increase pursuit of STEM pathways across Idaho
3. Align STEM + CS education with workforce needs

Review of STEM AC Programs

Dee introduced the program review by stating that the majority of the STEM AC's programs occur in the spring and summer. The first program Dee highlighted was the Science and Engineering Fairs. The state fairs are affiliated with and feed into the National Science and Engineering Fair. 34 projects will be presented at the Eastern Idaho Science and Engineering Fair happening in February. The Western Idaho Science and Engineering Fair will have around 30 projects presented in March. Two projects per fair will be sent to the National Fair, Ed asked how many volunteers are still needed for the fair and Katie stated that she will send Ed more information after the meeting.

Dee presented an overview of i-STEM highlighting that within 24 hours of the application opening over 90 participants applied. The current number is 195 participant applications. Katie stated that priority goes to teachers from title one schools and first-time participants. Jenn asked if Katie has seen more appetite for professional development opportunities. Katie responded by stating the goal of i-STEM this year is to keep each strand fresh and new, which has created excitement. Jenn stated that she is excited and impressed by the strand offerings this summer.

Dee presented an overview of externships as a program that allows teachers to work with industry. There were 258 applicants that need to be placed. Katie stated the application was closed a week early due to the volume of applications. There are 29 host sites and Dee asked the board to assist with finding more host sites for an extern placement goal of 113. Jenn asked if the placement goal needs to increase due to the volume of applications, which Katie stated there is only funding for 113 externs. Wendi also emphasized getting the word out about the need for host sites. Linda asked for a little overview of the request to the board members, Dee confirmed the overview will be sent to board members. Erin asked for a better understanding of the outreach the STEM AC would like to see to reach industry partners, Wendi responded that there is a website the board members can provide to potential partners and local employers if they would like to be involved. Francine highlighted that simply connecting partners who might be interested to the program managers at STEM AC. Jenn asked how they would connect partners to the STEM AC

Jake asked why the number of host sites has fallen in the last year. Katie stated that most host sites are repeats and some of the sites who have not come back to the table have stated they are restructuring, or the point of contact is no longer with the business. Katie also stated that resources and connections available in other parts of the state would be helpful due to a lack of networking in non-Treasure Valley parts of the state. She also stated that there is an option of 100 hours rather than 200 hours if that is what the site is willing to commit to. Jani asked if it was all in person or if there was a virtual option. Dee and Katie stated that most of the sites are in person, but some of the sites offer virtual options. Jenn wanted to highlight that INL has had wonderful experiences hosting educators through this program and the value of the program for both the host sites and externs. She stated it broadens the teachers' horizons and opens a whole new world for the teachers and students through this program. Wendi emphasized that the goal is to not have the teachers hired by the host sites. Jenn asked if the rumor that the program was going to end, Katie stated that the funding was going to end and then WDC stepped in to provide more funding for another year and communication has been effectively sent out.

Dee stated that STEM School Designation is going well and there will be a deep dive into the program in March. There will be a review of the school that will be joining at the March board meeting.

STEM ID scholarship opened on February 10th and Dee stated that students have taken the required coursework. Jani asked if the scholarship was for in state schools only, which Dee confirmed. Jenn asked how much the scholarship is, which Katie answered as \$3,000. Steve asked if the scholarship is for 4-year institutions exclusively and Katie responded that any student who has completed the required course work could go to any post-secondary institution in Idaho, which includes trades. Ed asked if this is no longer exclusively given to students who are enrolled in STEM Designated schools, which Katie responded that there was data showing the previous requirement was limiting the number of students who could apply. Jani asked if the scholarship was merit based, Katie confirmed it was. Steve stated that there has also been a shift in the Dairy Industry for requiring an internship to apply for the scholarship to keep the students in the industry after graduation. He stated the biggest goal is to incentivize staying in the industry. Ed asked if a list of scholarship recipients is available to Idaho Industry to access the information on students they may be working for. Katie stated that there are surveys the agency could add to the agreement process for these scholarships to facilitate those relationships. Jenn stated an information center with eligible interns would be very helpful to industry.

Discussion of the Next Steps for STEM AC and WDC

Dee stated that she appreciated the time she has spent with the members of the board to discuss the integration of the STEM Action Center into the Workforce Development Council. She also stated the structure of STEM Action Center and Workforce Development Council integration will be transitioned to a 3-bureau structure. The first bureau will be Strategy and Operations to focus on finance, data, and office operations. The second bureau will be the Education and Career Bureau, which will focus on innovative STEM education resources to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in tomorrow's careers. The third bureau will be the Employer bureau to bridge the gap between talent and opportunity. Dee stated that for fiscal year 2026 there will be two different budgets between the two agencies. She also emphasized that there is still an emphasis on the work that is needed and wanted in STEM Education. Wendi also stated that STEM is infused in workforce opportunities. Steve asked when the board would be impacted by this decision. Wendi stated that the operations of the board will continue as normal during fiscal year 2026 starting July 2025. During the development process of the FY27 budget there could potentially be changed in July 2026. Jenn stated that she feels this is the natural progression of the agency to break down the silos and increase collaboration. Jenn stated that slow and deliberate progression will help to not lose to importance of STEM Education in Idaho. Jenn asked if this has been discussed with the legislators at all, which Wendi stated the next phase is to socialize this transition to the legislators. She also stated that when the letter was sent to her key legislators were consulted prior to the Governor's decision. Dee stated that for the last 10 years the center has done a great job of awareness building and that the STEM Action Center is starting its next evolution. Jenn requested that the educators don't get left out of the conversation because of their important role in STEM Education and development. Steve stated that he is concerned that the solutions that are being developed are solutions for now and not for the future. He feels there is a misalignment between what is needed in the future and what the

focus and goals should be to meet that future. He hopes that the combination these two agencies will create a more adaptive organization that creates needed outcomes in education and workforce development.

Data Presentation

Dee introduced Matt Thompson who will be presenting data in about a Measurement of Outcomes. Matt introduced Lightcast which allows us to access realtime information on occupational needs. Lightcast provides current and projected population data and creates takeaways from the data it collects. There is a Labor Force breakdown as well as Education. Katie asked if each data point is not duplicated for education, which Matt confirmed. Matt panned over to industry data; he searched manufacturing in Twin Falls. The visual showed the supply of jobs as well as the earnings per job and the demand for jobs. There is supply data for the past as well as projections. Unemployment trends were shown and Matt stated that when WDC goes out to industry in the state it is an opportunity for talent development. Jani stated the Department of Labor provides 10-year predictions every two years based on past data. She stated that there is no ability to predict ramp ups and ramp downs. Matt stated that projections from Lightcast do not consider regional changes for example the building of Micron will create a ramp up in manufacturing career needs.

Dee stated that there is going to be more of a focus on figuring out measures of success for education being sought out and workforce demand.

Adjournment

Jake moved to adjourn. Jani Seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 3:06pm.