

**STEM Action Center**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**April 1, 2021; 1pm-4pm**  
**Zoom Meeting due to COVID**

**Listen here to IPTV Stream:** <https://www.idahoptv.org/shows/idahoinsession/archive/#stem>

**Call to Order**

Chair Dee Mooney called to order the regular meeting of the STEM Action Center at 1:02 pm on April 1, 2021

**Roll Call**

Due to COVID the STEM AC Board meeting was conducted via Zoom. On the Zoom meeting were Dave Hill, Tim McMurtrey, Wendi Secrist, Jeff Rosser, Dee Mooney, Jennifer Jackson, Jake Reynolds.

**STEM Action Center Staff:** Kaitlin Maguire, Erica Compton, Crispin Gravatt, Finia Dinh,

**STEM Action Center Contractors:** Cory Compton, John McFarlane, Joanna Madden

**Absent:** Paul Casey and Jad Mahnken

**Past Board Minutes Approved:** Dee asked for comments on the January 7th minutes. Since there were none, Dave moved to approve, and Wendi seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Opening remarks:**

Dee thanked the board for attending and turned the meeting over to Kaitlin who reminded the board that she would like to try a new format for the meeting by sending STEMAC updates in advance. The purpose of this format would be to provide the board with information about the ongoing work on the Team and allow for questions and discussion if needed.

Goal Updates: Kaitlin

Kailin gave a brief review of the INDEEDS awards and the new opportunity of Amazon Web Service a Statewide implementation of PD for HS. Finia is taking the lead on both. Update on the STEM Diploma: we have developed a seal to send out that will be placed on eligible student's diplomas. John is working with industry and Higher Ed on this initiative to promote the importance of earning a STEM diploma.

Kaitlin asked for feedback on this new format. Dave likes it a lot. More succinct and straight forward. Jeff echoed Dave's comments. Jennifer likes receiving one document far enough ahead to warrant questions and likes the highlights in the updates. Dave questioned why there were so few Student Computer Award applicants. KM shared that we applied to USBANK for grant to help supply devices at lower amount and with so few applicants we had to regroup. Perhaps we were not the ones to meet the needs with others doing at larger scale. Finia shared that in order to receive the award students who needed a device had to try a coding class which could have been an obstacle to getting more applicants. We did advertise via SM etc. and we did not coordinate with other organizations. Regrouping and trying to figure out how to get more applicants.

**Budget update:** Kaitlin reported that our budget passed both House and Senate and was on the Governor's desk waiting for signature. Only few changes including moving Crispin's position to General fund so all FTEs being funded out of General Fund now. Removed the \$100K miscellaneous fund we had not used. Combined spending authority is up to \$6M. Dee asked if this is what we were hoping for? Kaitlin responded that this was requested the budget that Angela put in last august. We feel good. This is probably the number we can expect going forward. Dave recommended we should not be more aggressive. This is the reference budget for future. Kaitlin thanked the Board for their support. Dee kudos to KM for getting up to speed so fast and to everyone for getting it through.

## **PAST PRESENT FUTURE:**

Kaitlin provided her personal thoughts on the direction of the AC. Now as we mature as an agency need to think about sustainability and continued outreach. How do we get there? Over the next few days provide feedback to documents provided. She gave a quick review of the legislation that directs our work and budget. Overall, given our budget and the number of FTE we have we need to prioritize how we accomplish all the mandated legislation. Jennifer: question the level of Computer Science spending vs the legislation and the lower amount being provided currently Is this enough? Dave: General Fund use is at our discretion so we could do more for Computer Science if we wanted. Kaitlin: as we continue move forward we really need to create a priority list because we cannot do it all. Dave: the State Board discontinued their own STEM Strategic Plan. Kaitlin: the Ecosystem is now providing the needs assessment across the state. She went through each line item in the legislation to explain how we meet these goals. From the legislation we developed our Mission and Vision and 3 goals. We would like to move to impact metrics.

Jennifer: what is the formal process for the need assessment? Kaitlin: we sent out a survey through the ecosystem to assess statewide needs. Wendi: use talent pipeline management to determine actionable ways that education can address the needs.

Kaitlin gave a brief background on the Ecosystem. Idaho Ecosystem was launched last year and now has over 100 organizations. STEM AC serves as the backbone for the Ecosystem. The governance group is leaning towards a regional hub STEM model. Critical that STEMAC leads the charge and collects the data. We have found this very time consuming and need to find the balance.

Wendi: Thoughts regarding JFAC and questions received. Maybe we should create a business plan with two funding mechanisms. Self-funding vs State Funding. A Business plan would make clear what we could and could not actually do with the funding model we use. Dee asked the board to consider "How are we going to navigate the future?" Board engagement is important and we need to share all kinds of ideas. If we are self-funding what happens with our structure? Wendi: when we review the legislation and current funding we need to look at what cannot be done. Does this mean it may have to be eliminated from the legislation? Might decide that we need to change the way we do things. If we don't have public funding we have a couple of years of experience with donor funding. Industry's interest could dictate what we do because of what they are willing to fund. Jennifer: if there are there other states that have gone down this road. Are there examples of shifting and do it successfully? Private funding would affect how we are governed. Kaitlin: most states are looking to Idaho and are envious because we are in the Governor's office which is a unique situation. States are constantly reaching out to us. Jennifer: concerns about total private funding how it may drive very specific donor needs. Whereas the Government has to look at the greater good. Kaitlin: 99% of the funds from industry are for programs. Iowa has state funds as well. Dave: historical perspective is that we were never intended to become solely privately funded.

Would be both but there would be a limit to the amount the state funded to accomplish legislated goals. Early on had many conversations around the balance of funding. Are we spending too much on PD and not enough on workforce? Move the STEMAC away from PD and more towards workforce. Dee agreed there were lot of camps early on in the conversations. Education, labor, future jobs and how STEMAC provides supports. We talked about it then and seem to still be needing to flesh it out. Jennifer: aligning with workforce development (WFD) is appropriate and more relevant to Idaho and our economy. Education is still there inherently but all our work seems aimed toward WFD as an end goal. Wendi: we are struggling with metrics and how we quantify. We cannot measure if WFD is having an impact. Struggling to find the right metrics. Wendi offered to meet with Kaitlin and find the right metrics to use. Sees the STEMAC as a WFD agency and PD part of WFD. Dave: that metrics are often event based, ie; how many students and how many teachers are involved. Jennifer: if we take the AWS model that is a WFD model and replicate it then would be easier to measure. Crispin: metrics that are in our capacity are a function of what our team can provide. We are hitting a point where we have a broader variety of programs than we can produce easier metrics from. We need an overall direction on what kind of data we want to collect. Dee: what do we want the STEMAC to accomplish? Clarify that and that will determine what the metrics are. Dave: don't let the metrics drive what you do. STEMAC is essentially programmatic. Focus on what the right thing to do is not the metrics. Industry involvement and donations is a good metric. Wendi: have to look at what are these donations being directed to. STEMAC laundry list is long. Can we do all. Dave: what has changed since we began? Need to ask those questions. What is not there what are we missing? Maybe we look at Utah or Iowa. Don't let the absence of metrics drive the program. There is a fundamental question: Is the balance between direct funding toward education or funding towards WFD? Kaitlin: need to throw the role of the Ecosystem into the discussion. Dave: Does the ecosystem exists outside the STEMAC? Kaitlin: clarified it would not exist without the STEMAC. We are propping it up. We have overlapping goals. Jennifer: can you clarify the data from Ecosystem survey and what were the take aways? Kaitlin: we learned that regional is very important. Funding needs are all over the map. Crispin: added the data we have gotten helps us determine what is and what is not available across the state.

Dave: Wendi and Kaitlin if we were to move towards the WFD could there be collaboration on a regional basis? Wendi: we do not have that in place yet. Kaitlin: the talent pipeline comes up a lot within the Ecosystem. Gave funding to regions to come up with their own needs. They have gone beyond expectation. Jennifer: likes the regional hub approach. There are a lot of regions outside Boise Valley. Rural needs larger than ADA because of where they are. How do we deal with rural needs? Is it going to truly coordinated?

Jeff: At GIZMO a lot of what they are talking about in N Idaho WFD is a bigger conversation than education. Not sure how to accomplish or meet the needs. WFD training is a big part of the conversation in N Idaho. Kaitlin: maybe the STEMAC could be there to assist and not have these regions reinvent the wheel. Maybe there is not a need for a hub in the treasure valley. Region 3 not represented. 4 joined 5&6.

Erica: explained that there has been a planning stage. Several regions at first joined forces to leverage resources. May not stay together over time. This was a good use of resources. Allowed them to move forward quickly. Jennifer: this really speaks to the need in the region. Did TV region not come up with a hub because there is no need? Erica: in the broader TV area there may be resources but they are areas where they do not know how to access them. We will need someone eventually to bring #3 together. Crispin: important question is what is the STEMAC role in the Ecosystem and the state 5-10 years down the road?

Dave: is this conversation providing clarity? Kaitlin: VERY helpful. Good insight on balancing coordination and programmatic efforts and a shift towards WFD and talent pipeline away from the programs and events. Focus more on the pipeline issue. Leaning more into our ability to provide structure more than programs. Several board members were not clear on what the right answer is. Wendi: how do the programs we do feed into what the WFDC needs that they do not currently offer. Wendi: offered to bring staffs together to white board what the answers might be for both centers.

Tim: Good to hear that programs are still important.

Dee: between now and next meeting Wendi's team and STEMAC should get together to come up with a plan.

Dee to Tim: Is the Dept. of Ed leaving STEM PD to the STEMAC? Tim: \$228K is going to STEMAC for PD via i-STEM.

Dee: Asked the Board to please reach out with any thoughts after this meeting.

Jennifer: described the idea of a learning continuum. Where does the work, awareness, programs etc lie on the continuum of learning? Could help define them and prioritize the work. Kaitlin: we are still working on awareness because STEM is still not understood in regions that we need reach.

**AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN:** Kaitlin reviewed the money coming to Idaho.

Kaitlin: We are looking for guidance on how to best use these funds. Being approached by partners on how they can best use this funding. Dee: Is money flowing to the districts and looking to us how on to spend? Kaitlin: Yes. We are asked two questions how can they access these funds and can we help, and how should they spend the funds.

Tim: Clarified that the funds do not go to the STEMAC and offered to find out how these funds are dispersed and spent. State Dept. is a pass through. Districts are cautious to accept funds to spend because there is accountability on how it was spent.

Dee: Are you looking for advice on best practices? Kaitlin: we are looking for what can we provide districts so they feel equipped to use for STEM education. How are these remaining state funds accessed?

Tim: Funds are distributed as a title one allocation. All formula based. Jennifer: perhaps we create an opportunity menu for districts including best practices. Curated list. Gear to the region's needs. Kaitlin: how do we take advantage of this influx of funding to encourage inclusion of STEM? Erica: we use the Ecosystem to help with this.

## **BOARD UPDATES: Commerce**

Jake: Broad band. Nov 2019 most that year thru Exec order by Governor developed a task force. Recommendation 11/20 with plans for 2021. Covid hit and cares funding hit and we received \$50M Cares funding. Connected 30K households with funding. Coming into the new year we had a surplus in budget and may get an additional \$35M to be appropriated. There has been a broadband advisory board with commerce as the vehicle to drive the spending. There is \$10M left from Cares to spend. Potential additional \$125M to come so will lean on the WFD and STEMAC to assist with identifying how to spend. Biden's new spending plan includes increasing to full coverage of broadband across the country.

New technologies include Star Link from Elon Musk. Infrastructure side have had money coming in as well. All this new money is a game changer for Idaho and in particular in relation to STEM. Kaitlin: connectivity comes up a lot in the Ecosystem. Jake: 100% connectivity would cost no more than \$500M in the state.

## **WFDC**

Wendi: Started working with IPTV to do video library with 360 virtual tours about manufacturing opportunities in Idaho. Ideas for next ones Micron, Chobani, Simplot (R&D) looking for thoughts.

## **Upcoming Events:**

Idaho Ecosystem Spring Convening: April 16th

i-STEM Professional Development Institutes: June 15-17 & 22 24

If a Board member would like to attend virtually let Finia know and she will send information.

Next Board Meeting: We will send out a Doodle Poll to determine the date and possible in person location as well as catch-up call times.

Dee thanked all attendees and adjourned at 3:20