

**STEM Action Center
Board Meeting Minutes
April 19, 2023 1:00 – 2:30 pm
Zoom Meeting/ In Person STEMAC Conference**

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Call to Order

Vice-Chair Ed Antienza called to order the regular meeting of the STEM Action Center at 1:00 pm on April 19, 2023.

Roll Call

The **STEM AC Board** meeting was conducted as a hybrid meeting in person in the STEM AC conference room and via Zoom. Attendance: Dee Mooney, Jad Mahnken, Steven Christensen, Wendi Secrist, Ed Atienza, Dave Hill, Jake Reynolds,

Absent: Jennifer Jackson, Allison Duman

STEM Action Center Staff: Caty Solace, Erica Compton, Katie Bosch-Wilson, Stephanie Lee, Crispin Gravatt,

STEM Action Center Contractors: Cory Compton, John Macfarlane

Opening remarks: Welcome by Ed. Briefly reviewed the agenda for meeting.

Approval of Board Minutes: Wendi asked that the minutes be amended to reflect Nepris not Next Steps. Wendi moved to approve the January minutes as amended. Seconded by Jad Mahnken. Minutes were approved unanimously.

FY24 Vision the Ecosystem and Idaho STEM Action Center: Caty Solace

Transition: Goals for FY24

Caty shared our goals going into FY23. She stated we are clearly fulfilling our legislative requirements including Computer Science component.

Staff is feeling the work we do has meaning and their time and efforts are being respected.

All funds connected to our intended outcomes.

We are using data to measure our impact.

Partners have a clear understanding of who we are and value our contributions.

Ultimately, we will work to act as a coordinating agency for STEM Education in Idaho.

The FTEs held 2 retreats in the past few months. Caty shared that she learned a lot from the staff over those 2 days. She stated that she has great respect for the work that has been done to establish the STEMAC. There were some operational issues that were brought forward to address. The staff looked closely at our legislation and discussed what kind of projects we should engage in. The staff examined the legislation that mandates that the STEMAC act as the coordinator of STEM Education in Idaho. Caty stated that coming into the STEMAC as an outsider allowed her to take a fresh look at what we have been doing to date and how we can take on the coordination as prescribed in our legislation. After great thought Caty felt it was time to move the STEM Ecosystem out from under the STEMAC to an established non-profit entity.

The EcosySTEM:

The Convening Update: The convening was a huge success. We had deep conversations around updating and revising the EcosySTEM Strategic Plan. We also shared the idea of moving the STEM EcosySTEM to an established non-profit. Caty provided a brief description of the existing EcosySTEM structure and several of the ideas that were considered to move the EcosySTEM forward. She described the composition and structure of the regional Hubs and how the STEMAC has been the backbone to the Ecosystem. There are currently 3 Hubs that have developed their own culture and are flourishing. She concluded by outlining what the EcosySTEM is dedicated to do.

Per our legislation the STEMAC is mandated to strategically engage industry, business and public or government entities to cooperate with the STEM action center and focus outcomes and goals on workforce needs and opportunities. It is thru that lens we are seeking to move the Ecosystem to a nonprofit who will act as the Umbrella Organization. This idea has received the Governor's approval. We approached Idaho Business for Education and received approval from their board last week to move forward to move the ecosystem. IBE is in a similar space as the EcosySTEM. They have the structure to provide the support needed and recently launched an apprenticeship program which aligns well with the EcosySTEM. The STEMAC will provide financial support through a sponsorship.

Caty outlined the key projects that will go with the EcosySTEM. These include coordination of the statewide network; membership in the national network; Idaho Exhibition of Ideas; Idaho Science and Engineering Fairs; Chief Science Officer Program; Early STEM initiatives and all place-based events and travel grants and sponsorships. We determined to move these programs based on the fact that these are place based events; one to one type models that do not do well under an agency structure; the STEMAC tends to hamper these types of projects.

Caty provided the proposed staffing structure that would go with the sponsorship. The EcosySTEM will have a Director, Program Coordinator and the 3 Hub Coordinators. Erica Compton will be recommended to be the Director. All Hub coordinators will become FTEs of the new Umbrella Organization. The goal is to make the shift by July 1.

This move frees up a lot of space and time to do more as the STEMAC.

Caty opened it up for questions. Wendi commented on the Workforce Development Council's role and funding that could be earmarked to potentially fund more Hub coordinators.

IDAHO STEM ACTION CENTER:

Caty commented that previous leaders did the right thing to set up the STEMAC. Now we can pay value to the past and move to the next phase. Caty then shared the legislation that established the STEMAC. She sees the first paragraph as the heart of our mission. She reviewed the entire legislation as written and highlighted portions of it. The excitement of moving to sponsorship of the Ecosystem will allow us to focus on the legislative requirement of statewide strategy and coordination. Caty shared the focus of the STEMAC going forward. Activities for FY24 start with focusing on our coordination role for Idaho's STEM Activities and Education. We will update the STEM Education Strategic Plan with an emphasis on subject based plans. With the sponsorship of the EcosySTEM we will continue to have access and use of the long term metrics. We will conduct statewide surveys of existing efforts and develop a STEM dashboard which is a part of our legislation. I-STEM is one of the things that is working well and will stay with the STEMAC. It needs to be re-evaluated and updated. We will get industry and educator feedback to make i-STEM the premier professional development opportunity in the State. It will run next year while we revamp it. STEM Activity continuum will provide best practices for K-12 education. We will continue to build awareness of and access to high quality resources like Learning Blade.

Foundation: We will begin a shift in how funds are raised. Donors who have restricted donations in the past will go with the EcosySTEM. The STEMAC will have a new development strategy with less restricted, larger donations. Removing restrictions will make fundraising easier.

Open to questions. Dee asked if there were any concerns raised at the convening? Caty said there were some concerns but overall, the response to the EcosySTEM move was positive. One idea which is to still up for consideration is to have the Ecosystem establish its own non-profit. Katie commented that people were surprised with the announcement. There was a desire to make sure the EcosySTEM work will continue. Will the STEMAC Board continue as we have? Caty responded that we may rely on the board even more. We will use the board as a sounding board for new ideas. Board becoming more active. Jake asked if there will be an MOU with IBE with measurables, funding, structure, milestones. Caty responded the funding support will be in the form of a sponsorship agreement. Caty proposed to meet again in late May or early June to review the details of the agreement. The agreement would include an intent to provide a sponsorship for 5 years depending on the metrics and growth of the Ecosystem. The EcosySTEM is already working on a sustainability plan to not rely on the STEMAC longterm and be independent and self-sustaining. The agreement will include legislative requirements. The sponsorship amount will be about a million dollars which Caty ran by the governor and was

supported. Jake asked if the funding comes from STEMAC existing funds not additional? Caty yes.

Legislative update:

Caty reported our budget was approved with no dissent. Two new FTE positions were included in that budget, and we hope to have the positions filled by July. Working on job descriptions for the communications director and Foundation director roles. We are going to pull all our contracted services in house and will not renew contracts as they come up for renewal. FTE will take on all those roles. The one exception will be an RFP for PR, design and communications under one firm. Long term will be good for our staff culture and continuity in our programs. Caty informed the board that Sondra Chadd has left as financial officer. Have begun the search to replace her. We have 6 candidates we will be interviewing in next week or two all with state fiscal experience. Hope to fill it ASAP.

Board Updates:

Ed asked if there were any Board updates or comments.

Wendi: Idaho Launched was approved by the legislature. The class of high school class of '24 will be eligible for \$8K. Idaho Launch will primarily support community colleges, apprenticeships, certification and 4-year degrees as long as they are aligned with workforce demand. Students will be required to complete a career pathway plan. Critical to have career pathways and workforce demand in place by June. Students will have one point of entry to use when they leave HS. Will engage college counselors to encourage them to work with students early on. Be able to provide a play book to students to reach their goals. Steve asked if there was any evaluation of Dual Credit and its effect on students? Wendi agreed to provide that information to Steve. Dave commented that the vast majority of Dual Credit are used to fill the early classes in first year of college. That is the good thing about Dual Credit. Overall, it has been a very useful program. Extensive discussion on the pros and cons of Dual Credit took place. Returning to the STEMAC plan Dave commented that he was glad to see the AC take on the coordination role with other agencies. Ed shared his experience at the FIRST robotics competition and how impressed he was with the knowledge and qualifications of the students and would encourage continuing to sponsor FIRST.

Caty asked if the Board was willing to meet in May/June for review the sponsorship agreement. Dave felt this was imperative for the board to weigh in on the agreement. Jake offered to share examples of similar contracts. Stephanie clarified that this is a sponsorship not a vendor contract. A Doodle poll will be sent out.

Ed made a motion to adjourn at 2:15.