

**STEM Action Center
Board Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2024 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
STEM Action Center Conference Room**

Board Members Present: Jenn Jackson, Ed Atienza, Linda Clark, Steve Christensen, Erin Simms, Jani Rivera

Board Members Absent: Jake Reynolds, Allison Duman

Staff Present: Dee Mooney, Katie Bosch-Wilson, Morgan Howard, Stephanie Lee, Wendi Secrist

Call to Order and Introductions

Jenn Jackson called the meeting to order at 1:32 pm. Thanked Board for attending. Introduced new Board members Jani Revier from Department of Labor and Erin Simms from St. Luke's Health System. Board members introduced themselves for new members' benefit. Dee introduced herself as new administrator of STEM Action Center and thanked new and existing Board members for their service. Staff introduced themselves.

Review of Board Meeting Minutes

Linda moved to approve the meeting minutes of September 24, 2024. Ed seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Review of Current State

Dee gave a roadmap for the meeting, including review of Q1, overview of major programs, mission and vision. She shared Idaho STEM Action Center's renewed vision, mission, and core values. Dee gave a brief overview of the major revenues and expenditures for Q1, highlighting the payouts to Idaho STEM Ecosystem, externship payouts, and grants.

Review of Program Goals and Expenditures

Dee gave a broad review of STEM AC's major programs, their costs, and their alignment to major goals. Dee reviewed Idaho Science and Engineering Fairs. Steve asked how many students participated last year. Katie gave a summary of the previous year, when IDSEF didn't occur due to compliance concerns. Steve asked how many had participated in the past, and how many were expected to participate this year. Katie shared that fewer would participate this year than in the past due to standards being brought into compliance with the International Science and Engineering Fair. Linda asked if Board members could attend regional fairs. Katie shared that Board members were welcome and encouraged to attend. Wendi asked if STEM AC would cover travel to ISEF; Katie responded that we would. Ed asked if industry judges had been recruited yet. Katie committed to follow up with EcosySTEM.

Dee gave an overview of i-STEM, highlighting growing participation and statewide impact. She then asked Katie to provide a more detailed explanation of the budget and impact. Katie shared

the fiscal structure of the program. Jani asked who had run i-STEM previous to 2018. Jenn responded that INL had founded and run i-STEM for many years before STEM AC took over. Steve asked if there was a measurable impact for students of teachers who attended. Katie referred to the EBL Impact Evaluation agreement, which seeks to evaluate the extent to which i-STEM attendance impacts STEM instruction. Katie added that many teachers shared anecdotes of i-STEM's impact, but that STEM AC was seeking further data. Jenn asked how many attendees were repeat attendees. Katie responded that 40% of attendees attended multiple times, and that there were more new attendees since school districts began funding teachers' attendance. Erin asked how regional needs were met in regard to program participation. Katie responded that the strands are selected for each region based on the needs and interests of each region. Jani asked if the curriculum changes year over year. Katie confirmed that while a few strands are repeated annually, but most change each year in response to demand. Jenn asked how strand providers are accepted. Katie responded that strands are selected based on multi-tiered applications and a matching process and that most providers are accepted but are often only offered at one location. Wendi asked how the end of the 2-year grant would impact the program. Katie responded that the main impact would be the loss of the temporary support staff member.

Dee gave a review of the Externship program, including the impacts of the grant provided by WDC and Micron. She shared that a major goal of the program is to bring in more industry partners. Jenn asked if the remaining funds would be lost if they weren't spent; Katie and Wendi responded that they were projected to be spent in time.

Dee gave an overview for the STEM School Designation program, including the FY25 goal to designate 2 additional schools. Jenn asked what professional development resources were available for schools seeking STEM designation. Katie shared that STEM AC and the STEM Designation Professional Learning Community was reworking the professional development structure. Linda asked what outreach STEM AC does to reach STEM schools of choice that were not STEM designated. Katie responded that STEM AC does reach out to those schools, and some decide not to become STEM designated, while others are interested. Katie added that STEM AC is looking to pursue more outreach and provide better support, and that the process has changed from previous iterations. Jani asked for clarification on the data behind the benefits of designation. Dee responded that STEM AC doesn't currently have data, and Katie added that agreements have been adjusted to gather more data. Steve asked if the program is designated. Katie responded that it was legislatively required. Steve commented that the budget for designation limits the opportunities for growth. Jani added that the Board could advise the legislature to adjust the budget or legislative requirement. Linda stated that the STEM Designation legislation contributed to School Choice legislation. Steve added that the monetary incentive to meet the standards of STEM designation could be adjusted.

Dee gave an overview of the STEM Identity Scholarship program. Ed commented that the structure of the STEM scholarship program had changed from 10 one-time recipients to 2 continuing recipients. Katie gave context regarding the previous STEM Diploma policy, and how the scholarship served to encourage students to do the coursework that would be required for the

STEM diploma without penalizing students in school districts that choose not to offer STEM diplomas.

Dee gave a brief overview of Idaho STEM AC's computer science activities. She highlighted STEM AC's legislated obligation to use \$500k of general funds for computer science initiatives.

Dee gave an overview of STEM AC's support of the Idaho STEM EcosySTEM and its contribution to the work of Idaho STEM AC. She also gave a non-exhaustive list of collaboration efforts that STEM AC employees take part in. Jenn asked if EcosySTEM takes part in these collaborations; Katie responded that most of the teams didn't include EcosySTEM to reduce duplication of efforts.

Discussion and Recommendations

Dee opened the floor for a discussion of the landscape of STEM AC's perception, performance, value, and future path. Dee gave an overview of a stakeholder survey she had administered. She highlighted the positive perception from educators regarding the value that STEM AC provides. She also shared the feedback from the Idaho Workforce Development Council. Wendi shared WDC's perceived challenges and opportunities of Idaho STEM AC's move under WDC. Erin commented that public perception often mistakenly assumes that STEM careers require 4-year degrees. Jani asked how STEM AC ensures that its efforts don't duplicate or compete with the efforts of State Board of Education or State Department of Education. Linda commented that the move to WDC presented an opportunity to find and eliminate duplications. Steve commented that he would like to measure the success of Idaho STEM Action Center by industry's need to hire talent from outside the state. Ed commented that the measure of industry hiring trends lags too long to be the only measure, and suggested that a success measure could also be enrollment in STEM programs at technical and 4-year institutions. Wendi identified potential challenges and opportunities for improvement in available data and definitions for datapoints. Erin commented that industries have a hard time connecting with K-12 education entities to get students interested in healthcare at a younger age. She identified connecting with K-12 educators and students as a large area of opportunity for collaboration between employers and STEM AC. Jenn echoed Erin's sentiments. Steve expressed frustrations with the workforce available in both degree-holding and non-degree-holding professions. Jani encouraged the Board to identify the specific niche that STEM AC adds value in to avoid duplication of efforts. Ed added that identifying the largest opportunities within specific STEM subject areas after computer science could be a lucrative course of action. Jenn asked how STEM AC interacts with CTE. Katie responded that she meets with several staff members of CTE regularly, and Dee added that she has sought feedback and input from CTE's state administrator. Linda commented that none of the issues that the Board identified would be solved without focusing on impacts in elementary schools. Wendi commented that STEM AC's niche was likely leveraging impacts in youth and early childhood. Linda agreed. Steve urged an approach of doing less, better, rather than trying to broaden impact.

Dee thanked the Board for their attendance and participation. Katie asked Board members to participate in Hour of Code. Steve welcomed the new Board members.

Adjournment

Jenn thanked the Board. Erin moved to adjourn, Jani seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:29 pm.