REGIONS 1 & 2 MEETING NOTES

Idaho STEM Ecosystem September Convening

September 17-18, 2020

DAY 1

IN ATTENDENCE

Sarah Penney, Chris Guthrie, Kay Seven, John Cassleman, Barb Mueller, Gail Ballard, Sharon Cates, Jessica James, Claire Deters, Tony Harrison, Cory Compton, Veronica Gonzalez, Angela Hemingway, Crispin Gravatt, Erica Compton, Finia Dinh, John McFarlane, Kaitlin Maguire, Teresa Vail

NOTES

Welcome & Introduction

Angela Hemingway, Executive Director of Idaho STEM Action Center, welcomed and thanked the group for being on the call, reminded them that the meeting will be recorded, discussed the agenda, mentioned the list of attendees that they received, and introduced STEM AC team.

Nick Aldinger, from IBL Events, went over the Basic Zoom Tips and Controls. His team was available for any technical issues during the call.

Angela went over the meeting norms, emphasized that STEM AC is here to learn from attendees, recognized that STEM AC has blind spots, and asked for honest feedback.

Crispin Gravatt, Data Analyst for STEM AC, introduced an ice breaker on Sli.do

- Question: In one word, what have you learned since February?

  Responses: Patience, Adaptability, Boundaries, Flexibility, Resilience, Consequences, Breath, Hedonism, Grace, Balance, Pivoting
- Question: What are you most looking forward to in 2021?

  Responses: Travel, hugs, change, seeing people, reunions, clarity, normal, teen in school!, reunions, vaccine, networking, restaurants

Angela went over the Intended Outcomes, the Idaho Ecosystem Timeline and Overview

EcosySTEM Aspiration

Angela read the EcosySTEM aspiration statement that was developed during the January convening to refresh everyone's memory. A poll was launched - How does this statement resonate with our ecosystem aspirations? 36% strongly agree, 64% agree

What do you like about this statement, what resonates with you, and what might we improve?

Summary: The statement may be too lofty and not clear or focused enough. When an aspiration is large, it can feel unattainable and not compelling. Some thought the aspiration should have or allude to specific metrics; however, outlining specific metrics doesn't quite fit with an 'aspirational' statement. Others chimed in that an aspirational statement is allowed to be big and not measurable; however goals with measurable metrics is important. There was discussion about adding in equity and

access or adding these to the intended outcomes. One individual commented that they are unsure if our actions will "lead to the creation" or perhaps "amplify that which exists".

Specific edits:

- Edit down the last part to "…lead Idaho's future economy"
- "Problem solvers and critical thinkers" is a little redundant, may delete one or the other
- "Sustain and lead" is sort of redundant and could probably lose the latter.
- "Idaho" is said three times in the statement.
- Add the word "knowledge" or "knowledgeable"?

Second poll: What do you hope the EcosySTEM can do for you, your organization, and/or your region?

- Funding 63%
- Networking 75%
- Connections between In- and Out-of-School education opportunities 63%
- PK12 education and higher ed/career opportunities 50%
- Policy and Governance 13%
- Other 13%

Why did you make the decisions you did, what was going through your mind?

Summary: Many chose networking because they find it valuable to share resources, meet people doing the work, streamline their efforts and be efficient. Everyone wanted to build our coalition and appreciate knowing what is going on throughout the state because it helps keep the regions connected. In addition, they would like to see STEM resources available for communities that haven't traditionally had them before and prevent resources going to the same communities over and over. There are a lot of populations that don't know about the STEM resources available and the STEM Ecosystem.

Statewide Survey Data

Crispin introduced and presented the statewide survey data. Thoughts and comments were added to the Sept. 17th Padlet.

This data is a snapshot in time, and STEM AC is still gathering responses. This survey will be supplemented with focus groups and interviews in the near future. This data is based on 110 respondents.

Who gave input? Lots of organizations located in region 3, but service areas are much more spread out (incl. statewide). We have a good spread of the kinds of orgs that gave input, and most serve the Pre-K – 12 populations.

Nearly 1/3 of the STEM 'power players' in communities across Idaho are industry. Other major players are higher education and out-of-school organizations. STEM AC was commonly named, which reinforces our role as the ecosystem backbone org.

Respondents shared confidence that the communities they serve know what STEM means, are interested in it, and value the skills and careers they bring. Many barriers still exist to STEM success across Idaho, including infrastructure, technology, funding, human power, and leadership.

Reminder: The survey will remain open, please share far and wide with your network. This survey is meant for anyone to take so that we get a full picture of the STEM landscape in our state The data will be available on the EcosySTEM website through the PowerPoint presentation.

Erica introduced the **Think Make Create (TMC)** project as an EcosySTEM initiative. This project will be providing STEM trailers to communities throughout the state to do hands-on making and STEM learning. The first trailer is being constructed at the Gizmo Makerspace at North Idaho College in Coeur d'Alene. The project is being led by the Idaho Out-of-School Network and 4H. During the 5-minute break, a video of the project was shown. Claire Sponseller from 4H and U of I, made the video.

After the break there was a giveaway. Winner of the giveaway received a 3D printed picture.

Discussion and Feedback on Survey Findings

Initial thoughts:

Summary: Data was insightful. Surprised by how high the percentages were on slides 22 and 23. There was discussion on why there is a slight increase in the level of "agreement" from "Community Knowing What STEM Means" to "Community Values STEM" since one might assume that a person would have to know what a thing is before they can value it. Suggested explanations were that the standard deviations of these numbers indicate they are not significantly different from one another and so this might not be a trend. Another suggested explanation was that the survey has been filled out by individuals/orgs that are already aware of STEM and are working on these higher levels of value already. It might be the case that we haven't reached populations who don't have interest in STEM or knowledge of STEM. Both suggested explanations highlight the need to have more people take the survey so that significant results can be confidently identified. One individual asked how many of those organizations that identify themselves as 'statewide' are serving the entire state and to what degree are they doing so? This level of information cannot be teased out from the survey data, but through focus groups and interviews we hope to learn more about what these statewide organizations are doing on the ground. Additional comments are on the Padlet –

How do these results seem similar or different from your experience?

Summary: Surprised that funding was called out as the biggest barrier to STEM efforts when industry was called out as the biggest supporter. This may because industry provides both funding an in-kind support such as volunteers and mentors. There was the discussion about what does STEM mean to different communities and how beneficial it is for different populations to learn from one another about what STEM means to them. For example, the tribal communities are connected to the land and view STEM through this lens. There were also comments on how the EcosySTEM can meet the needs of the whole child whether in the classroom or out of the classroom. Additional discussion was about broader participation in the survey, to see if the percentage of STEM awareness changes – perhaps it will decrease if individuals outside of our immediate networks take the survey. STEM AC asked participants to please help spread the survey to limit sample bias. The group spent some time brainstorming how to reach communities outside our normal networks and ideas including reaching out to United Way, State Department of Education, District STEM Coordinators, Idaho Rural Partnership, teenagers, parents/family groups, Facebook group pages especially Facebook parent groups, and ask libraries to ask their constituents to fill out the survey. A comment was made to get the survey directly to teachers. There was a suggestion to develop a specific survey for youth. It was noted to encourage your partners to fill it out even if they aren't "STEM" focused.

What did we not ask in this survey? What is missing from the conversation?

Summary: When reaching out it is important to frame the request so that they understand their input is needed and what we are looking for. There was discussion on creating inclusive language to accompany the survey so everyone feels included to fill out the survey.

Crispin reminded the group that the Padlet will be available to add thoughts/ideas before tomorrow's meeting.

Working Groups

Angela provided updates on each working group. Crispin provided update on the Asset Mapping working group which has taken a break because the asset and needs survey is underway and because TIES, the national ecosystem organization, is working on developing an asset mapping software that we can use. If you want to join or change working groups, please reach out to us.

Feedback on Working Groups:

Summary: Reaching out to industry is important. Many other groups and partners have needs assessments too so how do we share and work together? Examples provided were Idaho Citizen Counties group and Talent Pipeline Management Academy that has a portal. Several partners on the call work with the talent pipeline management academy and mentioned that once these are designed it will be great to connect the EcosySTEM to industry. Communication is critical and glad that there is a communications working group.

Who in your community should be involved in the EcosySTEM that isn't here?

Summary: the youth voice; economic development representatives; other tribal departments such as fisheries, language and culture, tribal department of energy, and tribal/BIE schools; K-12 teachers/staff/admin that serve high percentage of students from underrepresented populations. Economic development representatives have been involved in Region 2 to help students be prepared and encourage them to stay or move back to the area.

Crispin recapped the meeting and discussed what will happen during tomorrow's meeting.

DAY 2

IN ATTENDENCE

Sarah Penney, Kay Seven, Caty Solace, John Cassleman, Barb Mueller, Gail Ballard, Sharon Cates, Jessica James, Jeff Rosser, Claire Deters, Veronica Gonzalez, Angela Hemingway, Crispin Gravatt, Erica Compton, Finia Dinh, John McFarlane, Kaitlin Maguire, Teresa Vail

NOTES

The meeting started with the "This is STEM" video. https://youtu.be/1MM_oToOVEI

Welcome

Angela welcomed the group. The "This is STEM video" is available on STEM AC website and can be shared publicly so please share.

Angela went over the agenda and explained that this meeting will be focused on data from Regions 1 and 2.

Ecosystem Commitments
Angela introduced the Ecosystem Commitments concept. Commitments are powerful in showing our collective work and can help support funding efforts and bringing on partners. Each year STEM AC makes commitments to national organizations/movements (e.g. CSforAll, MakeforAll). Commitments are measurable, large or small, may not require funding or time, and do not need to be new. Commitments help us leverage each other's work, find funding, and bring on new partners.

STEM AC identified four commitment categories based on the EcosySTEM's apsiration – education, partnerships, equity, and ecosystem infrastructure. These commitments should support the Ecosystem's aspirational statements. Commitments may fall into one or more of these categories – there is overlap between categories. Commitments can be small with individual commitments (e.g. educator) to large lofty commitments for larger organizations. STEM AC envisions a broad range of commitments that will be posted on the EcosySTEM website.

Angela went into details on the four categories of commitments and examples of each (see slides).

Angela introduced STEM AC's draft ecosystem commitment: Idaho STEM AC commits to serving as the backbone organization of the Idaho STEM Ecosystem and through this work will bring together stakeholders from across the state to work towards an equitable STEM education plan for PreK-20.

This is just an introduction to the commitment concept and there will be more discussion about it at the Oct. 30th meeting. STEM AC is not asking for commitments now, just want participants to start thinking about it.

Participants can put their thoughts in the Sept. 18th Padlet:
https://padlet.com/crispingravatt/vw32e4z4t34zr63j

Initial thoughts about commitments:
Summary: Participants liked the idea of the commitments because they provide a way to hold ourselves and each other accountable. They also allow the individual to determine if their strengths overlap the organizations' need. Overall they provide a framework or cornerstone that other folks can build on, add to, and reference. They are something we can ask of people in a non-threatening way. Some participants began putting draft commitments into the Padlet. One participant asked if people are hesitant to make public commitments during these days of uncertainty and indicated it may be better to hold off on this to a time when people are more certain. And one participant said making a commitment might be difficult for smaller organizations. It was discussed that this may or may not be true for businesses as well. It was clarified that the commitments will be optional and will be made in the spring. They can be as small or as large as an organization decides. Accountability falls to the organization and the EcosySTEM will not be tracking them. The commitment can be to share the vision and work of the EcosySTEM. Or may be a commitment to get excited about the work or share the work of others. The commitments will be revisited as an option for 2021.

Survey Data – Regions 1 and 2
How was community defined:

- Rural and small populations
- Remote
- Agricultural

- Tribal presence
- Strong connections to land – almost everyone commented on this (work, recreation, etc.); geography; sense of belonging
- Mixed industry, largely featuring forestry and agriculture

What are the existing assets/needs:

- Available
    - Specific programs were listed with great success
    - Higher education networks – major players are UI, LCSC and NIC; they provide resources for PreK through higher ed
- Missing
    - Funding
    - Coordination - connection between industry and education; can be due to the geography of the region; silos occurring
    - Interest and awareness - especially for families (what is STEM, what is the value of STEM, what can it do for them).

Initial thoughts on this data. What is accurate? What is inaccurate?

Summary: Tourism and mining are two big industries not included in the summary. Lack of coordination is accurate. Lack of school/industry partnerships is also accurate. Also lack of commitment from partners/stakeholders. The EcosySTEM can help support this potentially through the Careers and Pathway working group. Also it would be nice to have something shareable via social media with a link and who is invited to fill out the survey.

How do partnerships occur in Northern Idaho:

- Specific programs or events
- Shared resources
- Funding
- Limited/None – don't have the time to collaborate or don't know where to start

List of achievements (most common):

- Specific programs were listed
- Placemaking (i.e. makerspace) – within schools, libraries or other orgs.

Measure of Success (most common):

- Headcounts – number of people attending
- Surveys – impact of the program
- Fluency in program materials – measurement of skills or completion of programs

Regulatory/Policy Needs (most common):

- Organization:
    - Guidance from policymakers – on the ground practitioners are looking for this, e.g. how do I implement science standards to meet policy needs.
    - Unknown – many people do not interpret their work through this lens, so they don't know
- Community (myself as an individual within my community):

    - Industry guidance – practitioners want to know how can the work I do mesh with the work industry does, what are industry's STEM workforce needs to help students meet this need.
    - Internet access – there are internet access deserts in these regions, as an economic *and educational tool.*

What are barriers to your success:

- Funding – lack of it and lack of consistent funding over the years
- Cultural barriers
- Lack of devices/tech support – lack of them or how to use them or implement them for STEM

How does your org approach equity and what is needed to support equity:

- Approach Taken:
    - Target demographics – many programs target these populations through outreach and recruitment, also the programming is focused on serving these populations.
    - Reduce barriers to entry (free to participate, hotspots, etc.)
- Supports Needed:
    - Funding – to provide free or reduced costs programming, to provide hotspots
    - Communication – regional bridgebuilding and leadership - can reduce duplicate efforts and reinventing the wheel.

Initial thoughts on this data. What are the barriers to success?

Summary: To overcome the funding barrier it was suggested to better leverage the collective resources we have to keep STEM moving forward, particularly with underserved populations. The data overall reflects what is going on in the community as it pertains to funding and access to the internet. Lack of access to the internet in some communities is currently because the right people are not connecting and collaborating. Several communities are receiving CARES funding to support internet access. How might this connect to the data we are seeing? There is overlap between the results on this survey and other organizations are recognizing similar needs. We know they relate but don't know what to do with that information and there is confusion on what are the next steps and how this new work/funding relates to this data.

What is missing from your experience in this data/feedback:

Summary: Some key industries are missing such as tourism and mining. We need more input from the parents of students who are in underserved communities. Participants liked the idea of finding parent groups on Facebook. Missing water on the community slide – the connection to, quality of, and rights to water.

5-minute break with "This is STEM" video, followed by a giveaway

Regional Discussions Based on Survey Data and Needs

- What work are you doing?
    - SDE has a full-time science coach in Rathdrum to help with science education and help with science standards in Regions 1 and 2, especially for out-of-school work. The coach will be doing trainings in Kamiah. Look at Padlet for links to the coaches website, monthly webinar, science standards PD, and more.

    - SDE has a grant opportunity for enhancing STEM education. Look at Padlet for link to more information.
    - This year, Schweitzer wanted to be more experimental with their outreach. They are skeptical of the career fair approach because they want to have more engagement and dive deeper. They heard from the community that more in-depth information about careers is needed, so they are doing virtual snapshots of job types. Goal is to have them throughout the year and iterate. The intent for the first two is to reach regionally but are interested in scaling it up and exploring national now that this effort is largely virtual.
    - Dream It Do It is a program in Region 2 with great success. It is a regional career fair that came about from all the schools in the region because it is easier to do one event rather than stretching everyone thin. Local economic develop group is active in attending these meetings as well as other meetings. They have a team member that is available to reach out to a variety of groups. There was discussion on how to make this model better and scale it. One barrier is that everyone involved is a volunteer. Consolidation of resources (staff, talent) could help at the state level.
    - Other participants added their comments to the Padlet.
- What are the most effective ways to reach you?
    - Some participants felt regional gatherings/meetings to foster conversations on a regular basis would be beneficial while others cautioned that meeting 4-6 weeks would be overwhelming, especially since we are all adapting and pivoting to meet the new needs of the community. Some participants said direct email is the best way to communicate.
    - Participants liked the idea of a directory with EcosySTEM participant contact information. There was mention of maybe a "member's only" website where this directory could live. One participant liked the idea of multiple options to engage involvement at various points throughout the year. Some may want to meet; some may just want to have a platform to share their updates/needs/etc.
    - Good to create social media posts to share with their groups (FB, Twitter, etc.) and help one another cross post.

All slides and notes will be available next week via the EcosySTEM website, including links to the Padlets.

Crispin went over Oct 30th whole group meeting that will focus on setting goals, metrics, a communication plan and leadership plan. Please invite anyone that should be involved in this discussion.

Angela introduced the Regional Ecosystem Planning Grants – during the Oct. 30th meeting there will be regional meetings to discuss this opportunity. $5-10k per region to support determining next steps for your region.

STEM AC will send out a survey next week about this meeting, please fill out.