



APPROVED Minutes
Education Committee Meeting
Forum
2500 West Broad Street

October 19, 2023
1:30 p.m.

Present: Cristina Ramirez, Dr. Denise Walters, Patricia Nicoson (Teleconference), Dr. Rodney Berry, David Mills, Elsa Falls, Karey Malysko, Amishi Amin, Fran Bradford.

Staff Present: Timshel Purdum, Rich Conti, Ada Sue Siler, Ash Harris, Cat Erdas.

Other Attendees: Cindy Norwood-Marquez, Office of the Attorney General
Sumeet Shrivastava, Chair of Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation;
Adalene Spivey, Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation; and
Chris Powel, Vice Board Chair of the Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation.

Dr. Berry called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Dr. Berry welcomed everyone and asked for everyone present to review the meeting minutes from the June 15, 2023 Education Committee Meeting. Dr. Berry asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 20, 2023 Education Committee meeting. The motion was called by Dr. Walters and seconded by Ms. Falls. A vote was taken by verbal affirmation which passed unanimously without objection.

Education Team and Inspiration Index

Ms. Purdum shared an overview of the last two months from Team Education.

- The summer was very busy for the education team.
- The recent Minds of All Kinds (MOAK) was well attended and is fostering great community relationships.
- The Second Annual Virginia Fiesta was a great success and proved to reach new audiences in the greater Richmond area.
- The LEGO grant projects continue to move forward, over 300 space kits were donated by LEGO.
- The LEGO kits have been shared with local retirement homes, schools, and local organizations.
- New interactive programming has been added to the offerings at LightPlace early learning area.
- Summer camp continues to be a tremendous return on investment.
- Next year the program will expand to 9 weeks with 60 campers per week.

- The team recently hosted a climate resiliency workshop in spanish with local community hispanic partnership.
- New interpretive signage has been installed in The Green.
- The audio aspects of the signage are offered in english and spanish.
- New programs are in development to better align with standards of learning for schools: Intro to Robotics, Fruit Dissection, Illuminating Light.
- Survey data collected from teachers helped identify priorities.
- Buses were low on priority considerations for teachers.
- The top factors influencing teachers to schedule field trips include cost, SOLs, the fun factor, and hands-on activities.

Experience Development Team, Deep Dive into Evaluations

Mr. Conti introduced Cat Erdas, of the Experience Development Team.

- Ms. Erdas conducts exhibit and museum-wide evaluations.
- One key reason for conducting evaluations is to fulfill grant requirements; such as National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- Another purpose of the evaluation process is to better understand the needs of guests and how to engage them more at the campus.
- Previously, the Museum evaluated the development and fabrication of the SPEED exhibition.
- SPEED development was approached in a new way, concentrating on a concept/theme, not just a discipline of science.
- This strategy is now fundamental to the Museum's exhibition development process.
- A new tool being used to evaluate is Personal Meaning Maps, or PMMs.
- A PMM is a map of the brain when hearing a word or phrase, then jotting it on paper.
- The PMM process is similar to word association.
- As part of the LEGO grant requirements, surveys were conducted using the PMMs model around the word "play."
- Top word associations that stood out were "games, friends and fun."
- The Museum is striving to find ways to increase the words "science and math" with the word "play."

Dr. Berry commented that the association of the word "outdoor" with "play" falls in alignment with the mission of The Green. Dr. Barry also asked about the potential of having guests experience The Green virtually. Mr. Conti responded that The Green is best experienced in person. However, the Museum does offer digital demonstrations.

Ms. Bradford asked about other data collected as part of the evaluation. Ms. Erdas stated that membership data including zipcode and socio-economic status was cross referenced and will be analyzed.

Mr. Powell asked what the furthest zip code is for a member. Ms. Erdas responded that most are for Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland, but many are much further. Ms.

Falls asked what the most frequently occurring zip codes are. Ms. Erdas said she would have to consult the data and follow up.

Mr. Powell asked about the zip code mapping as it relates to field trip bookings. Ms. Erdas said that school zone data needs to be overlaid with the zipcode data for the findings to be meaningful. Ms. Purdum added that school data has been collected and hot spots for attendance identified. Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia are the most frequent visitors.

Mr. Mills asked what the next frontier will be for this type of data collection. Mr. Conti responded that hiring a full time data analyst would be warranted. Data collected will inform the development of new content.

Ms. Erdas continued the presentation regarding evaluations.

- The Museum participated in the annual American Alliance of Museums survey in collaboration with Wilkening consulting.
- This survey has occurred every year for the past seven years.
- In the recent data collection, over 210 museums participated and over one hundred thousand surveys were collected.
- The Museum had over 300 participants.
- Data collected from museum goers included a typical respondent profile.
- Over 70% of respondents were female.
- Several specific questions and their responses were shared.

Ms. Bradford asked who the survey was promoted and pushed to. Ms. Erdas stated that AAM has strict rules about advertising and decimating the surveys. The third party, Wilkening Consulting, distributes the surveys.

Ms. Malyszko asked about the frequency of this survey. Ms. Erdas replied, "once a year." Ms. Malyszko also asked about the Museum's plan for the findings. Ms. Erdas stated that the data will be used to fine tune and improve the guest experience.

Dr. Walters asked how many surveys went out and how many were completed. Ms. Erdas said that only 3% of the surveys sent out were completed.

Ms. Erdas then invited the Trustees and the others in attendance to participate in a small brainstorming activity regarding the new design for The Dome lobby renovation project.

New Business

Dr. Berry asked for any new business.

Adjournment

With no further business Dr. Berry asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Bradford made the motion which was seconded by Ms. Malyszko. Dr. Berry called for a vote which passed unanimously without objection and the meeting was adjourned at 2:22 p.m.

The Education Committee will meet again on January 18, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.