

Virginia STEM Education Advisory Board
Virtual Meeting, ZOOM
Meeting Minutes



June 23, 2023

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

In Attendance:

Board Members Present via Teleconference: Amy Sabarre (Chair), Dr. Padmanabhan Seshaiyer, Dr. Susheela Shanta, Amy White, Victoria Chua, Gary Artybridge Jr., Casey Roberts

Ex-officios and Staff: Dr. Brendon Albon, Jason Powell and Ada Sue Siler (Science Museum of Virginia Staff)

Guests: Damodar Ambur, Jim Egenrieder

Topics:

- Review of mission and goals
- STEM Hub Workgroup Update
- State STEM Ecosystem Proposal
- STEMx Partnerships and collaborations
- STEM metric feedback
- Public Comment and New Business
- Motion to adjourn

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Ms. Sabarre called the meeting to order at 10:03am. She welcomed everyone and noted a quorum was present.

Ms. Sabarre called for a motion to open the meeting. The motion was made by Mr. Roberts and seconded by Ms. White. A vote was taken by show of hands, all in favor, motion carries.

Approval of Minutes (December 12, 2022 and March 3, 2023)

Ms. Sabarre asked for any changes to the minutes before approval. None heard.

Ms. Sabarre called for a motion to approve the December 12, 2022 and March 3, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. The motion was made by Ms. White and seconded by Ms. Chua. A vote was taken by show of hands, all in favor, motion carries.

STEM Advisory Board Mission and Goals

Ms. Sabarre reviewed the mission statement for the Board.

“The Virginia STEM Education Advisory Board provides continuous recommendations, establishes and aligns integrative STEM education efforts, and expands resources for all Virginians”

STEM Hub Workgroup Update

Ms. Sabarre shared the working document link with the group in attendance. Collectively the Board reviewed and edited the information.

The STEM Hub Workgroup is composed of 25 people, including board members, community partners and workforce development groups.

Ms. Sabarre expressed that the board needs to face the tough questions and answer them head on.

Mr. Roberts asked if the document defines an end goal? or is the intended goal the same as the board's: to increase educator awareness. Are there any established action plans or times lines to get these goals off the ground.

Ms. Sabarre responded that the document serves as a guide for the Board, and not an action plan.

Dr. Seshaiyer added that once the goals are defined, the board needs to address funding. Perhaps breaking down projects into a grid of high/low impact and high/low effort may help with determining areas of key focus.

Ms. Sabarre stated that correct strategy is necessary to bring hubs to fruition. Reaching out to different areas for appropriations or funding is a good place to start. Should the workgroup take a pause at this time?

Mr. Roberts replied that the work should not stop. The focus at the September meeting should be to triangulate next steps for funding.

Mr. Albon added that developing multiple plans of approach would be useful. Perhaps a Plan A with Plan B and C for contingencies.

Ms. Sabarre shared that the Virginia Environmental Literacy Network is establishing hubs and they have funding. The Board should follow up with key stakeholders. It may be a good idea to

invite them to future gboard meetings and include them in communication. The Board would like to align with them and learn from them, not duplicate efforts.

Ms. White suggested reaching out to community colleges as potential sites for hubs. Community colleges are uniquely positioned to be the bridge between k-12 education and 4 year schools. Having an awareness of their efforts around the state will only help the Board learn from and coordinate with them

Mr. Albon mentioned that aligning with entities that are striving for a common goal creates coagulation.

Mr. Egenrieder mentioned that this group cannot move as fast as the private sector, so reliance on coordination is key.

State STEM Congressional Funding Proposal Updates

Ms. Sabarre shared highlights of the congressional funding proposal process since the last meeting.

Ms. Sabarre stated that during the application process, many discussions were held with the Office of the Attorney General regarding the proposal. The Secretary of Education's office said that the Virginia Department of Education had to go through the gold sheet process to become the fiscal officer. OAG has many new staff and they provided a fresh perspective. Ms. Sabarre made changes per the OAG recommendation, and then submitted the updated proposal for the Gold Sheet process on April 20. VDOE was denied as the fiscal agent unless the Governor approves it.

Ms. Sabarre stated that there has been no "no" yet, so there is still the possibility of the funding going through. Warner's office has stated that the proposal is in review.

Mr. Albon said that the Gold Sheet process was completed correctly. The Virginia Department of Education is under new leadership and other state entities are catching up. Mth standards are undergoing revisions across the state. The efforts of the Board need to align with new set standards. A signature from the superintendent is needed to help establish the relationship with the Boards. Dr. Coons, the new superintendent, is new to Virginia. It would be great if the Board can write a letter of introduction that focuses on the initiatives of the Board. The letter should also include the request for approval to have DOE be a fiscal agent.

Ms. White offered any help needed to facilitate the relationship between VDOE and the Board. Who can be invited in September to the board meeting to help facilitate these relationships?

Mr. Albon suggested inviting Dr. Coons to the meeting.

STEMx Partnerships and collaborations

Ms. Sabare discussed the STEMx event sponsored by Batell. STEMx is supportive of the efforts of the Board and has offered advice and the potential of funding. Ms. Sabarre encouraged other board members to participate in some of the upcoming STEMx meetings. A sign up sheet will be sent out after the meeting.

STEM metric feedback

Ms. Sabare asked for feedback and suggestions on the STEM metric document. The metric is an effort taken on by the board. The metric went through a feedback process and received positive feedback. Many edits have been made but more work to be done.

Mr. Roberts asked if there is a plan to pilot the implementation of the metric and see it perform applied versus theoretical.

Ms. Sabarre said there have already been some pilot school programs and that feedback has been incorporated.

Dr. Seshaiyer stated that using culturally inclusive stem wording is important.

Mr. Egenrieder asked to add wording to be more comprehensive of science and engineering: interactive.

Dr. Shanta agreed with the use of the term integrative.

Mr. Roberts stressed the importance of this document as STEM's rosetta stone. We want to set our definitions and stop adjusting them.

Mr. Albon expressed his view on the level of influence the STEM board has to inform the VDOE on STEM definitions.

Mr. Powell reminded the board that the goal of the board is to advise the cabinet, not just VDOE. Ms. Sabarre asked how to achieve that goal. Mr. Powell replied that simply keeping the cabinet and secretary's office in the loop will suffice.

Ms. Sabarre asked the board which other organizations should be invited to the next meeting on Sept 8. Dr. Seshaiyer spoke about seeking a connection with Dr. Koontz. Ms. Chua asked how best to reach out to community college contacts. Ms. White said she would reach out to the Cancellors she knows at regional community colleges. Mr. Roberts mentioned inviting industrial leadership from STEM related work fields and Virginia Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Egenrieder mentioned the new Virginia Statewide Invention Education Initiative.

Ms. Sabarre asked Mr. Powell to advocate for funding for food and travel expenses from the Secretary of Education.

Mr. Roberts offered to host the September 8 2023 Board meeting and provide lunch. The location will be in Hampton Virginia. His assistant will take minutes and run day of coordination.

Ms. Sabarre asked Mr. Powel about board members coming to the end of their term and new appointments. Mr. Powell said he would inquire and follow up with Ms. Sabarre.

Public Comment and New Business

Ms. Sabarre asked for any public comment. None heard.

Ms. Sabarre asked for any new business. Mr. Egenrieder mentioned the growing workbase initiatives across the state. These initiatives started an organic group that grew, VDOE identified coordinators for regions across VA for high quality work based learning. The board should recognize this initiative and glean from it.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Dr. Seshaiyer to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Roberts. A vote was taken by show of hands, all approved, non opposed. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 11:52 am

Zoom Recording Available

Next Meeting is September 8, 2023.