

Virginia STEM Education Advisory Board
Virtual via ZOOM



Meeting Minutes

February 23, 2024

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

In Attendance:

Board Members Present: Amy Sabarre (Chair), Amy White, Victoria Chua, Gary Artybridge Jr., Casey Roberts, Edward Monroe, Chris Dovi, Zaina Tarafdar, Rashid Farell, Amy Thompson,

Ex-officios and Staff: Justine Taylor-Raymond (Deputy Secretary of Education) and Ada Sue Siler (Science Museum of Virginia Staff), Emily Salmon, Lisa Wornom-Zahraiddin

Guests:

Topics:

- Welcome new appointees introductions of board members
- Approval of minutes from last meeting
- Board Member updates
- Reviewing our Goals for 2024-2026
- Funding and grant options
- Virtual Break
- Determining regional hub map (SWOT)
- Lunch break 30 minutes 12-12:30
- Defining Hub deliverables
- Application process for regional hubs
- Public Comment

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Ms. Sabarre called the meeting to order at 9:05am. She welcomed everyone and noted a quorum was not yet present. When a quorum arrives, action items will proceed.

Ms. Sabarre noted that Mr. Artybridge and Dr. Shanta will remain on the Board in emeritus status. They will no longer be voting members.

Ms. Sabarre reviewed the agenda for the day and then welcomed all in attendance to introduce themselves. Attendees then took turns sharing their background and motivations for working in STEM.

Ms. Sabarre took a moment to review the vision and mission of the board, including the enabling legislation for the board.

General Updates

Amy White discussed the progress regarding college credit and interns, noting that there were no updates. However, they expressed the belief that this effort is valuable and can be achieved, and they pledged to establish a process for moving forward.

Ms. Tarafdar and Dr. Shanta, along with Amy Sabarre, provided updates on the federal funding request, indicating that it is still in limbo due to delays in the appropriation process caused by the political environment. Chris Dovi mentioned having hopeful conversations with legislators.

Additionally, discussions revolved around advocacy efforts for STEM education, including plans to engage with congressional members and attend STEM-related events such as the STEMx meeting and the National STEM Festival in April. The meeting also touched upon the upcoming STEM ecosystems meeting at VCU and the National Rural STEM Summit scheduled for June 4-7, 2024, in Tuscon, AZ.

Establishing Board Goals

The board discussed several goals for advancing STEM education in the state.

Goal 1 involves defining the parameters for state STEM hubs, including regions, functions, application processes, review timelines, and funding systems.

Goal 2 aims to create a website and STEM asset map by December 2026, providing access to STEM education information for students, parents, and educators.

Goal 3 focuses on seeking additional funding for STEM infrastructures, with plans to create a legislative proposal and budget amendment by September 2024. The board intends to visit legislative representatives during sessions to communicate their objectives.

Goal 4 centers on making recommendations to the Governor's office regarding STEM jobs, work-based learning, and career and technical education. This includes initiatives such as micro-credentials for teachers, with details to be shared by Chris Dovi. The board emphasizes

the importance of representation from universities, community colleges, and the Virginia Department of Education to address key issues and utilize available resources effectively.

Clarification on protocol, regulations and rules for board members

Mr. Farell inquired about the rules and regulations governing board interactions. Ms. Sabarre clarified that conversations involving two board members are informal, whereas gatherings of three or more members constitute official meetings subject to posting protocols. Mr. Dovi suggested arranging for legal training on topics like FOIA compliance, with Ms. Sabarre proposing that Ms. Love could conduct virtual sessions for board members.

Additionally, reminders were issued regarding communication etiquette, including limitations on texting and email usage. Mr. Farell raised questions about protocols for committee meetings involving multiple advisory board members and inquired about opportunities for practical exposure, such as co-ops, within the state. Ms. Sabarre noted the board's focus on career and technical education, highlighting collaborations with workforce partners and discussions on internships and externships. However, specific action steps in this regard have not yet been formalized as the board prioritizes addressing the needs of the regions and establishing STEM hubs. Mr. Dovi emphasized the importance of the hubs as points of intersection for various stakeholders, facilitating connections for work-based opportunities.

Ms. Sabarre discussed funding and grant options during a meeting, mentioning a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant due on March 27, 2024. She highlighted the existing systems in place to apply for grants through the Secretary of Education's office or the Virginia Department of Education, noting the typically short response time required. Ms. Sabarre also mentioned a discussion with Justine Taylor-Raymond about implementing an "intent to apply" process, which would allow the STEM Board to obtain preliminary approval before drafting a full proposal. Additionally, Ms. Sabarre requested information on any other grant opportunities that other members may be aware of.

Advocacy and Key Focus Points

Ms. Sabarre sought input on the message she should convey at the STEMx Meeting on the Hill. Mr. Dovi shared insights from conversations with Warner's office, indicating the need to explore alternative funding sources beyond congressional appropriations.

Ms. White emphasized the importance of strategically identifying funding needs and wants, suggesting the creation of a solid list to guide advocacy efforts. Ms. Sabarre highlighted the need for travel funding, event funding for students, and sustainable funding for key positions.

She proposed drafting a list for board review, with Ms. White suggests prioritization of items and the importance of equitable distribution of funds. Ms. Sabarre then requested line items for creating a comprehensive document to capture funding ideas.

Regional Hub

The board outlined several goals, including defining parameters for state STEM hubs and establishing a process for applying and selecting regional hubs. This process involves defining regions, outlining hub functions, establishing an application and review process, and determining funding allocations and systems.

Funding needs encompass various aspects, such as supporting student experiences, professional development, infrastructure sustainability, staffing for regional STEM facilitation, and board travel expenses for both regional and national STEM conferences.

Additionally, there's a goal to create a website and STEM asset map to provide access to STEM education information in Virginia. This includes information on CTE student internships, STEM programs (both in and out of school), regional hub locations, STEM outreach opportunities, community events, industry partnerships, professional learning opportunities, and relevant resources.

Funding needs for this endeavor include website support, staffing, and student interns for AI and GIS components. Seeking additional funding to support state STEM infrastructures and making legislative asks are also priorities. Recommendations to the Governor's office focus on STEM job initiatives, work-based learning, micro-credentials for educators, and funding for regional hubs and staffing support. Additionally, grant writing funding and travel for STEM advocacy are identified as essential funding needs.

The discussion revolved around various initiatives aimed at establishing regional hubs and ecosystems in Virginia. Ms. Sabarre highlighted four different initiatives, including efforts by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) for math standards, CodeVA's regional partners for professional learning, the Environmental Literacy Network, and STEM ecosystems facilitated by TIES Teaching Institute. Each initiative faces different challenges, such as funding and physical location. The board explored how these entities could be integrated into a resource map and discussed potential hub structures. Instead of relying on physical locations, they considered using point people to coordinate within regions and securing space on an ad hoc basis.

SWOT

Padu was initially set to lead the exercise, but Ms. Sabarre will now take charge of the SWOT analysis.

Ms. Sabarre introduced the Jamboard tool for collaborative work on the SWOT analysis of regional hub divisions. Participants were asked to add their names and locations to the map, discussing the definition of regions, including Go Virginia and VDOE regions. Mr. Dovi raised concerns about the practicality of using predefined VDOE maps for coordination, suggesting the creation of a new map. Ms. Sabarre proposed drawing a custom map and emphasized completing the SWOT analysis. Mr. Farrell inquired about the possibility of changing the map later, to which Ms. Sabarre suggested allowing flexibility for localities to choose their alignment with regions.

During the discussion, Ms. Sabarre inquired about the maps used by Ms. Salmon and Ms. White, who mentioned mainly utilizing the GO Virginia and Superintendent maps. Ms. White highlighted the use of GO Virginia maps for funding requests and emphasized the defined service areas of community colleges. Mr. Dovi proposed the idea of nodes in addition to hubs, suggesting community colleges could serve as valuable supplements.

Ms. Sabarre expressed concern about potential negative associations between STEM Board efforts and VDOE elements. The group leaned towards using GO Virginia maps, with consideration for differentiation from existing initiatives. Ms. Sabarre suggested collaboration with Secretary Slayter to ensure GO Virginia's approval. The discussion leaned towards using GO Virginia maps but with clear differentiation from existing initiatives and further consideration for nodes. Mr. Farrell proposed defining mitigation strategies and allowing adjustments to borders as needed. Ms. Sabarre tasked Mr. Dovi and Mr. Farrell with drafting the next steps, to be finalized before the next meeting. Mr. Dovi offered support to Mr. Farrell, who accepted the task despite being new to the board.

Ms. Sabarre highlighted the need for an entity to represent the regional hubs and facilitate collaboration and resources without impeding progress. The question arose whether this entity should be a person or a physical location. Mr. Dovi emphasized the importance of clarity and suggested developing a guide to start the program. He proposed the idea of identifying an administrator in each region without limiting participation, defining their role in logistics and funding while allowing others to contribute to production and output. Ms. Sabarre clarified that while there would be a designated administrator, all members within the hub region would participate and collaborate with them. Ms. Salmon shared insights from the VTOP program facilitation process. Ms. Wornom-Zahraiddin emphasized the importance of marketing the

efforts as inclusive and highlighted confusion between education and workforce initiatives. Funding was identified as a key challenge, with the location of key players in coastal Virginia and Hampton Roads being beneficial due to access to legal, development, and financial resources. Chris stressed the need for collaboration within regions and the importance of identifying key individuals to support the efforts.

Approval of Minutes (December 8, 2023)

Ms. Sabarre asked for any edits to the September 8, 2023 minutes before approval. None heard.

Mr. Dovi called for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Farrell. All approved, motion carried.

Lunch

Ms. Sabarre asked for a motion to break for lunch.

Ms. White called for a motion to break for lunch. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dovi. All approved, motion carried.

The group broke at 11:56am and return at 12:30pm

Defining Roles and Responsibilities of Hubs

Ms. Sabarre led a discussion on Goal 1, focusing on defining the roles and responsibilities of regional hubs. Members participated in an exercise involving three columns: what hubs should do, maybe do, and not do. The group reviewed these lists, with no objections, and prioritized activities such as hosting events to foster excitement among students.

Ms. Thompson expressed hesitance about asking hubs to host events in the first year, suggesting it as a second or third-year endeavor.

Ms. Sabarre emphasized prioritizing activities and allocating funds from the congressional funding ask for hub initiatives. Mr. Dovi highlighted the importance of marketing and public awareness, suggesting seeking pro bono support for branding efforts.

Discussion also revolved around governance structures for hubs, with Ms. Sabarre stating that the Board would offer guidance while allowing hubs to develop their own structures. Ms. Salmon stressed the need for operational direction and tools to support hubs effectively. The group reviewed a rough draft of a STEM hub application, with plans to refine it for future

meetings in preparation for potential funding. Finally, Ms. Wornom-Zahralddin expressed admiration for the group's efforts and offered additional support if needed.

Public Comment and New Business

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

Ms. Sabarre asked for any new business.

Adjournment

Ms. Sabarre asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. White called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dovi. All approved, motion carried.

The meeting concluded at 1:20pm. The next meeting will be held on April 23 2024. The meeting notes were recorded by Ada Sue Siler.