

Virginia STEM Education Advisory Board
In Person
Science Museum of Virginia
2500 West Broad St, Richmond VA 23220



Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2024

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

In Attendance:

Board Members Present: Amy Sabarre (Chair), Amy White, Victoria Chua, Edward Monroe, Chris Dovi, Rashid Farell, Amy Thompson, Dr. Padmanabhan Seshaiyer

Ex-officios and Staff: Zach Jacobs (Deputy Secretary of Education), Ada Sue Siler (Science Museum of Virginia Staff), Emily Salmon, Dr. Anne Petersen (VDOE Office of STEM & Innovation Science Coordinator), William Reid (Secretary of Labor Office)

Guests: Deb Love, Office of Attorney General

Topics:

- Welcome
- Approval of minutes from last meeting
- Board Member updates
- Federal Appropriations
- STEMX
- PR discussion around Federal Funding
- Draft Hub structures, functions and interactions document
- MOU with VDOE
- Public Comment

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Ms. Sabarre called the meeting to order at 10:04am. She welcomed everyone and noted a quorum was present.

A video from the office of Tim Kaine was shared.

Ms. Sabarre reviewed the agenda for the day and then welcomed all in attendance to introduce themselves.

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

Approval of Minutes (February 23, 2024)

Ms. Sabarre asked for any edits to the February 23, 2024 minutes before approval. None heard. Ms. White called for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dovi. All approved, motion carried.

General Updates and Federal Appropriations

The congressionally directed funding request for \$1.028 million was approved, marking a significant achievement. This request, initiated in March 2023, involved numerous discussions with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the governor's office. Despite facing challenges throughout the process, including the consideration of 150 other requests from Virginia, many of which were for lower amounts, the efforts were deemed crucial by Senators Kaine and Warner in terms of enhancing access to quality STEM education in the state. The request successfully passed both the Senate and the House on March 21. Gratitude was expressed for the collective expertise and assistance received.

A noteworthy event was a productive meeting with Dr. Seshaiyer during Stem on the Hill, an event sponsored by the STEMX organization. This national initiative facilitates connections among state STEM leaders and provided a valuable opportunity to engage with Senator Kaine over the course of two days.

Furthermore, Amy Sabarre was invited to speak at the White House AAAS STEM Opportunity Alliance on May 1. She eagerly anticipates showcasing the accomplishments of the STEM Board and its future endeavors on this esteemed platform.

Amy White will share a flyer with the details regarding biotech education opportunities from the community colleges.

Next Steps

During the discussion, it was reiterated that the main objectives with the funding are as follows:

1. To establish regional hubs and nodes aimed at fostering collaboration and facilitating connections between various stakeholders including government agencies, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and corporate entities.

2. To enhance awareness and accessibility of resources and opportunities for educators, students, and families within each region and across the state.

3. To expand and align professional development opportunities in STEM education across Virginia, targeting both formal and informal educators, while ensuring adherence to effective models and common metrics.

Additionally, the main budget allocations were outlined to include provisions for staff, travel, seed grants, consultants, summits, and indirect costs. It was emphasized that fundraising and grant acceptance are permissible.

Acknowledging the commencement of the work, there was a consensus on the need to expedite the establishment process. Mr. Farell sought further details on budget allocations, and Amy Sabarre directed him to the link providing comprehensive information.

Public Relations Discussion

During the board discussion on the Marketing and PR plan, Emily Salmon highlighted the recent article in Harrisonburg, leading to inquiries about potential partnerships. It was emphasized that the board lacks the capacity to handle the workload and requires dedicated staff. Regarding ideal partners, Victoria suggested reaching out to preferred entities, while Chris Dovi emphasized the importance of establishing financial procedures. Amy White stressed the need for a clear organizational structure and fiscal framework.

Anne Peterson from the VDOE outlined the necessity for all funds and structures to go through their department, with decisions on expenditure ultimately made by the STEM Board. Rashid Farell recommended referencing the proposal for guidance, particularly in terms of allocation and direction. Questions were raised about the scope of fund usage, with Anne Peterson committed to providing clarity on this matter.

Plans for public relations were discussed, with considerations including initial messaging about funding and broader marketing strategies. Suggestions included developing a high-level press release and establishing consistent communication protocols with the public. Amy Sabarre underscored the need to establish effective collaboration with VDOE to access funds and identify alternative fiscal agents for future endeavors.

Clarifications were sought regarding the timeline for deliverables, with Amy Sabarre indicating a performance period of one year for the proposed activities.

Regional Hub

During the discussion, it was proposed to create a document outlining parameters for student interns to receive credit within the regional hubs, with a workgroup tasked to develop this document. Volunteers were called upon to join the group.

The previous meeting involved a SWOT analysis of two regional state maps, with a preference emerging for the GO Virginia map. Further discussion and steps toward implementation were deemed necessary.

Anne Peterson from the VDOE highlighted the move towards a hub model for regional symposiums, with identified HUB specialists and a superintendent model comprising eight regions. There were discussions on aligning with existing maps and addressing geographic challenges, particularly in region 6.

Dr. Seshaiyer emphasized considering the audience perspective, incorporating the Secretary of Labor and workforce viewpoint. Amy Sabarre expressed concerns about potential limitations from VDOE in selecting hub locations, advocating for content availability across map lines.

The concept of hubs and nodes was deliberated, with a suggestion to use both the GO Va map and VDOE Superintendent maps. The focus shifted towards a collective impact model, with the need for designated entities in each region.

Amy White proposed an organic approach to developing the map based on applicant preferences, with gradual expansion to accommodate specific needs. Dr. Seshaiyer suggested an internship model aligned with school years.

There was agreement on starting with a few hubs, focusing on the most needy regions initially, before expanding gradually. Anne Peterson suggested beginning with two strong and two high-needs hubs.

Chris Dovi called a motion to adopt both the VDOE Superintendent Regions map and the GO Virginia regional map as a starting point for the STEM Hub Network, which was seconded by Rashid Farell and carried through a vote.

Another motion was made by Chris Dovi to form a working group to refine the VDOE Superintendent Regions map and GO Virginia map to consider Virginia STEM 's commitment to regional accessibility, mitigating barriers, and accounting for travel patterns and obstacles. The

goal of the work shall be to optimize access for educators, families, workforce development, and business partners. Scope of the working group shall be defined and further refined by the chair of this board. This motion was also seconded by Dr. Seshaiyer and approved by the board through a vote.

Lunch

The group broke at 11:31am and returned at 11:54am.

Hub Application and VDOE MOU

During the discussion, members reviewed and edited the hub application document, focusing on various aspects such as applicant requirements, governance structure, and budget allocations. Emily Salmon emphasized the need for applicants to be multi-party entities, supported by Chris Dovi, who stressed the importance of a lead entity, regular communication, and diverse areas of focus. Anne Peterson suggested explicitly stating the areas of focus and purpose vision in the application, while Amy Sabarre committed to adding the definition of STEM.

Chris Dovi highlighted the need to define target audiences across divisions beyond formal education, and Anne Peterson outlined minimum requirements such as involvement of K-12 and businesses and quarterly meetings. Suggestions were made to add point values to aspects of the application and establish partner forms for legitimate partnerships.

Discussion shifted to the MOU between VDOE and the Governor's STEM Advisory Board, with key components such as scope of deliverables and budget considerations discussed. The need for further discussion with the Attorney General's Office regarding hiring contractors was noted.

Chris Dovi stressed the importance of website development and suggested using a private entity instead of a state agency for the project. Amy Thompson raised questions about budget reallocation, and Anne Peterson suggested breaking the first year into stages and phases.

Amy Sabarre and Chris Dovi agreed to draft a new MOU for presentation at the next board meeting, while Anne Peterson clarified the process of application review through VDOE. Rashid E. Farrell raised concerns about potential impasses, to which Deb Love explained the chain of command up through the secretariat chain of command.

The meeting concluded with plans for further discussion and drafting of the MOU, as well as clarification on application review processes and potential challenges in decision-making.

Public Comment and New Business

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

Ms. Sabarre asked for any new business.

Discussions revolved around scheduling future meetings, both virtual and in-person, over the upcoming months. There was deliberation regarding collaborative document editing, with some members advising against it. The formation of working groups was also discussed, with a consensus reached on having 5-person workgroups, requiring a quorum of 3 members. The date for the next board meeting was set for May 7 from 8am-12 pm.

Specific tasks were assigned to various members: Amy Sabarre called for chairs of workgroups. For the Regional map task, Chris Dovi and Rashid Farrell were assigned, with additional members including Amy White, Casey Roberts, and Zaina Trafadar. For the Hub applications, Emily Salmon and Dr. Seshaiyer were designated, with Amy White, Ed Monroe, and Amy Sabarre joining them. Additionally, the Regional hub parameters document regarding student interns for credit was referred to the workgroup for further consideration.

Adjournment

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

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

The meeting concluded at 1:52pm. The next meeting will be held on May 9 2024. The meeting notes were recorded by Ada Sue Siler.