



APPROVED Minutes
Education Committee
VIRTUAL Via Zoom
2500 West Broad Street

June 18, 2025
1:30 p.m.

Present: Dr. Denise Walters, Gina Burgin, Patricia Nicoson, Ram Venkatachalam, Jeff Bentley, Cristina Ramirez, David Mills, Thomas Gottwald, Dr. Irma Becerra, Dr. Robert Winn, Fran Bradford, Elsa Falls

Staff Present: Timshel Purdum, Rich Conti, Dr. Rose Basom, Ash Harris, Courtney Moyer, MJ Benson, Elli Bosch, Jesse Anderson, Ada Sue Siler

Other Attendees: Lauren Coleman, Office of the Attorney General; Cindy Norwood-Marquez

Dr. Walters called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Dr. Walters welcomed everyone and asked for everyone present to review the meeting minutes from the January 16 2025, Education Committee Meeting. Dr. Walters asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was called by Dr. Becerra and seconded by Mr. Venkatachalam. A vote was taken by verbal affirmation which passed unanimously without objection.

Education Team and Inspiration Index

Ms. Purdum provided a review of the Inspiration Index:

- April and May remained very busy.
- The conclusion of the school year included a high volume of on-site demonstrations and field trips.

- On-site student visits have continued to rebound strongly, with nearly 18,000 students visiting in April and May, compared to approximately 14,000 during the same period last year.
- Spring programming included several successful events such as "Minds of All Kinds," ongoing laser shows, the Earth Day Festival, campouts, and a stained glass workshop for seniors.
- A notable event was the Sunrise Science program featuring a LEGO Masters participant who built a detailed scale model of the Science Museum using over 33,000 LEGO bricks.
- The "Science Within Reach" initiative has expanded, with senior-focused programs such as "Senior Makings" hosted in the Forge, proving particularly popular.
- Outreach efforts continue at a high pace, supported by dedicated corporate volunteers who assisted with major tasks such as relocating historic bricks from the train station.
- The Museum welcomed its second cohort of teen leaders and launched its summer programs, welcoming both volunteers and interns.
- Among the summer team is an intern from the Partnership for the Future program, highlighting continued collaboration with youth development organizations.
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Museum Collection Accession requests

Dr. Rose Basom introduced the collections accession requests, noting that the Education Committee will review the accession process.

- A discussion was held regarding the formal accession of three items into the museum's collection.
- Although the Museum is not a traditional collecting institution, exceptions can be made for items with direct relevance to its history.
- The Museum maintains two types of collections: educational and permanent collections, with the latter containing items of historic value.
- Formal acknowledgment is required for the inclusion or denial of the three proposed items.
- The first item is the RF & P Dispatcher's Train Manifest, shared by Richard Beetles.
- It had been on long-term loan, and repairs were completed in 2005.
- The second item is a Water Drum created by an artist from the Nottoway Indian Tribe for display in the Danville Science Center's Water exhibition.

- The previous drum was on loan and returned to the Department of Historic Resources.
- The new drum was constructed from locally sourced wood and used in PowWows and other social events.
- The third item is a Western Union Stock Ticker, intended for the Speed exhibit's Trading Speed case.
- It explores the evolution of stock market transactions.
- This item was offered as an accessioned alternative to a similar object previously on loan from the Smithsonian.

Dr. Walters invited questions or discussion. With full agreement to proceed, a motion was called by Dr. Bradford and seconded by Ms. Norwood-Marquez. A verbal vote was conducted, and the motion was unanimously approved with no opposition.

Upcoming Events

Ms. Purdum reviewed upcoming events:

- June 21 Early Explore featuring Virginia Repertory Theatre
- June 23 Astronomy Watch Party: Rubin Observatory First Look
- July 10 Laser Show Outkast
- July 12 Minds of All Kinds
- July 15 Senior Morning
- July 20 Early Explore featuring Virginia Repertory Theatre
- July 24 Science on Tap Dino Night
- August 16 Early Explore featuring Virginia Repertory Theatre
- August 21 Laser Show
- August 25 Sunrise Science—Synchrotron Science: How to Mount a Dinosaur
- September 13 Teacher Resource Fair
- September 14 Early Explore featuring Virginia Repertory Theatre
- September 17 Senior Morning
- September 18 Laser Show
- September 26 Science After Dark
- September 4 Power of Poison Opens

New Business

Dr. Walters asked for any new business.

Adjournment

With no further business Dr. Walters asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Norwood-Marquez made the motion which was seconded by Ms. Bradford. Dr.

Walter called for a vote which passed unanimously without objection and the meeting was adjourned at 1:49 p.m.

The Education Committee will meet again on October 16, 2025.