

**STEM Action Center  
Board Meeting Minutes  
April 10, 2024, 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm  
STEM Action Center Conference Room**

**Members Present:** Jen Jackson, Ed Atienza, Steven Christiansen, Wendi Secrist, Dee Mooney, Jad Mahnken, Jake Reynold

**Staff Present:** Matthew Reiber, Stephanie Lee, Sarah Howard, Morgan Howard, Meliah Anchustegui, Katie Bosch-Wilson, Nate Dean

**Call to Order**

Jennifer Jackson called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

**Approval of the minutes**

Changes to the October 31 Board meeting minutes were requested. The second page, indented bullet, Jennifer corrected that Idaho is not the first state to have a STEM Action Center, but “one of the first states” or “modeled after successful models.” Wendi Secrist moved to approve the minutes with changes, Dee Mooney seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Wendi Secrist moved to approve the November meeting minutes, Dee Mooney seconded, motion pass unanimously.

Changes to the February 7 board meeting minutes were requested. The second page, change wording from “legislative intent has changed” to “STEM Action Center’s response has changed.” Wendi Secrist moved to approve the minutes with changes, Dee Mooney seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**STEM Workforce Report**

STEM Workforce report, Ed Atienza. Ed shared a presentation on “GREAT” Days at Schweizer Engineering Laboratory, reaching over 150 8th grade students with 80 volunteers from SEL. He shared the activities that students completed and shared details about the SEL headquarters in Pullman, WA. SEL sells electronic products worldwide and has experienced sustained growth since its inception in the 1980s. The manufacturing plant in Lewiston, ID employs over 800 people, and a new printed circuit board factory opened in Moscow, Idaho. Over 1000 of SEL’s 6000 employees are based in Idaho. He shared the main hiring needs of SEL in 4 categories: Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, Technicians, and Assemblers. He shared that SEL is projected to continue growing and their need for skilled employees will grow even more quickly. Ed then detailed the outreach efforts in the K12 and postsecondary education spaces. He highlighted “Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day,” which recognizes women in engineering and encourages participation from 5<sup>th</sup> grade girls. Ed also detailed classroom visits, field trips, and site visits. In the 2023-2024 academic year, SEL has engaged with over 3300 students and had participation from over 150 SEL volunteers. Year over year, SEL is seeing 30% increase in engagement. Dee asked what the education requirements for assemblers are. Ed responded that a high school diploma is sufficient, and that the hiring pool ranges from recent high school grads to veterans to former educators. Dee then asked how that differed from technician and

engineering positions. Ed responded that these positions generally require a 2- or 4-year degree, and that SEL has to look to hire from outside Idaho to reach sufficient numbers of electrical engineers. Jennifer thanked Ed for his efforts and for sharing.

### **Agency Updates**

Matthew Reiber shared staffing updates. He introduced himself, sharing his position as the K12 policy advisor for the governor and the interim director for the STEM Action Center. He introduced Morgan Howard, the new communications manager and Meliah Anchustegui, the new financial technician. Matthew turned the time over to Katie Bosch-Wilson.

### **Programmatic Updates**

Katie shared programmatic updates for STEM AC programs. The Externship program received 123 applications, and was on track to exceed the goal of 90 placements. Istem received over 400 participant applications and will be able to serve all of them. IDSEF will be taken on by EcosySTEM, with STEM AC continuing to handle the International affiliation. Nate Dean chimed in that ASRT applications had closed, but that there were still open slots and he would be happy to help support application for any interested teachers. The STEM School Designation Leadership PLC has met and Nate is creating a new process to align with newly adopted standards. STEM AC is working with multiple school districts in alignment with the CSforAll NSF Grant, and providing grants for teacher certification in computer science. Additionally, STEM AC is working with AVID (statewide & regional partner) to support code.org trainings over the summer. Jen Jackson asked how many new hosts and new externs were involved vs. repeat participants. Nate responded that there were several repeat Externs and that there have been several new host sites participating, and that Nate and Halle have attempted to prioritize new participants. Jen then asked if teachers have to go through ASRT training to participate in IDSEF. Nate responded that it wasn't required, but was offered as many teachers expressed the need for additional training, and clarified that club leaders or local volunteers were also welcome to participate in order to better support IDSEF in the future. Jen asked that there be more training opportunities for IDSEF participants in the future. Jen then shared that INL has been hiring high school interns, and that mentors are asking for computer science learning for their interns. She shared that interns were well served by having computer science literacy, and that public schools are not meeting that need. She shared that the best intern applicants had found other resources to learn computer science and coding, but that nearly all out-of-state applicants had proficiency in at least one, if not several coding languages. Katie asked if those students were coming from states with computer science graduation requirements. She emphasized the need for students to have a background in computer science. Dee asked how many high schools around the state offer computer science. Katie responded that 38% offer computer science in-person courses, while IDLA offers computer science across the state. She added that there were only 43 computer science-certified teachers in the state, and that not all of those teachers were in the classroom. Jen suggested that Idaho pursue computer science requirements for graduation. Katie shared that she is sitting on a board looking into preparing Idaho, Oregon, and Washington for computer science graduation requirements. Katie shared high-level updates on the EcosySTEM, including the FY25 agreement that had settled on \$983,000. She highlighted that the EcosySTEM is clarified

for regional support and that STEM AC has pulled back on providing statewide sponsorship. She also detailed language changes in the STEM Ambassador and ISEF/IDSEF sections of the agreement. Katie then highlighted the funds that EcosySTEM regions had awarded, including statewide competition travel funds. Dee asked for clarification on the \$983,000 agreement. Katie reiterated that the \$983,000 comes from STEM AC to IBE to run EcosySTEM. Jenn asked for the amount that was changed, and Katie responded that EcosySTEM would receive roughly \$100,000 less, with a large part of that being the statewide sponsorships that EcosySTEM would no longer be awarding.

### **Foundation Updates**

Sarah Howard, STEM Action Center Foundation Manager shared highlights and achievements of her 5-month tenure with the STEM Action Center Foundation. She has built relationships across the state and pursued giving campaigns. She also highlighted strategy changes that the foundation has pursued. She highlighted the upcoming Idaho Gives campaign. Sarah also directed attention to the draft Sponsorship Menu that would help guide giving from industry donors and the fundraising roadmap she has been developing. Sarah shared that the annual foundation Board meeting would be occurring at CWI during iSTEM and invited the Advisory Board to attend if they were interested. She shared that the foundation was on track to raise over \$300,000 for FY24. Dee commented that, at future meetings, she would be interested to see how EcosySTEM and STEM AC collaborated on grant applications. Sarah shared that the NASA Idaho Space Grant Consortium was a joint effort between EcosySTEM and STEM AC. Katie gave further context for how EcosySTEM and STEM AC will pursue funds jointly in the future.

### **Executive Director Updates**

Matthew shared that the Board would receive polls to schedule Board meetings for FY25. He shared that STEM AC FY25 budget had been approved and that the budget request for FY26 would be due on September 1. He encouraged the Board and staff to consider what priorities they would like to pursue for the FY26 budget. He shared that he, the Governor, and the Governor's Chief of Staff would be discussing the next Executive Director, and that it is a top priority to find a suitable Executive Director. He shared that staff will be pursuing a strategic plan at the staff retreat next week, and that he would be following up with Board members to hear their priorities and recapped the 2024 legislative session. He shared that there was very little legislation directed toward STEM AC, except for \$40,000 shifting from STEM AC to the Library Commission. He shared that the legislative session was largely contentious, but had achieved a nearly \$1.5 billion investment over the next decade to address school facilities, and that LAUNCH was fully funded. He added that LAUNCH had received 13,500 applications out of 22,000 high school seniors. He highlighted the efforts of multiple agencies toward the success of the LAUNCH program and added that the Opportunity Scholarship had received record numbers of applicants. LAUNCH awards will be awarded this summer with funds going out in the fall. Wendi added that WDC had just started on updating the playbook relating to go-on opportunities, and that they would like to engage STEM AC in that effort. Matthew thanked WDC for their efforts getting LAUNCH passed.

Ed thanked STEM AC for their support of the First Robotics program.

### **Adjournment**

Dee Mooney moved to adjourn, Ed seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:34 pm.