

Ohio STEM Committee Meeting Minutes

NOVEMBER 21, 2025

9:00 – 11:30 A.M.

DAYTON REGIONAL STEM SCHOOL

1724 WOODMAN DR., KETTERING, OHIO 45420

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Tom Schwieterman, M.D., Vice President of Clinical Affairs and Chief Medical Officer, Midmark Corporation, STEM Committee Chair (appointed by the Ohio State Senate)

Andrew L. Aichele, Vice President of Education, COSI (appointed by the Governor)

Jeff Polesovsky, Connect Real Estate (appointed by the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives)

William Ashburn, Workforce Project Manager, Ohio Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation (designee for the Director of Development)

Jana Fornario, Associate Vice Chancellor, P-16 Initiatives, Ohio Department of Higher Education (designee for the Chancellor of the Department of Higher Education)

Jeremy Varner, Deputy Director, Division of Career-Technical Education and Workforce, Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (designee for Director of the Department of Education and Workforce)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PRESENT

Graham Wood, Administrator, Office of Graduate Success

Sarah Redick, Ph.D., STEM Education Program Specialist

Jenny Russell, STEM Program Administrator

Dr. Chris Woolard, Chief Integration Officer

OHIO STEM LEARNING NETWORK PRESENT

Sandra Wilder, Ph.D., Director

Kelly Gaier Evans, STEM Program Manager, Battelle Education

Anna Pyles, STEM Project Specialist

OTHERS PRESENT

Dr. Robin Fisher, Dayton Regional STEM School

Jen Reid, Dayton Regional STEM School

Mindy Clark, Dayton Public Schools
Dr. Roxanne Allen, Chase STEMM Academy
Dr. Robin Sheffield, Chase STEMM Academy
Dustin England, Chillicothe Primary School
Heather Tarlton, Chillicothe Primary School
Dana Letts, Chillicothe City School District
Teresa Gause, Shenandoah Elementary School
Trevor Tom, Shenandoah High School
Justin Denius, Noble Local School District
Kolby Rayner, Noble Local School District
Philip Theobald, Noble Local School District
Sheila Ross, OAISS
Manika Williams, Ohio National Guard

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE STAFF RECORDING MEETING MINUTES

Jenny Russell, STEM Program Administrator

Opening

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Tom Schwieterman called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made to approve the November 21, 2025 STEM Committee meeting agenda made by Jeff Polesovsky, seconded by Andy Aichele.

All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

APPROVAL OF MAY 12, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

Motion made to approve the May 12, 2025 STEM Committee meeting minutes made by Jeremy Varner, seconded by Jeff Polesovsky.

All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Tom Schwieterman welcomed Committee members, Department of Education and Workforce and Ohio STEM Learning Network (OSLN) staff, and guests to the meeting. Kelly Gaier Evans of OSLN gave an organization staff update. She said that OSLN is evolving and it's been a pleasure to work with the Committee. She has taken a new position within Batelle Education, STEM Program Manager. She's excited and it's not goodbye; she will still be working with OSLN in an advisory role. Dr. Sandra Wilder is the new director of OSLN. She has worked closely with Kelly over the past four years developing OSLN's strategy. Kelly has strong

faith in Sandra and her experience. Sandra is deeply committed to the shared vision of OSLN. Kelly thanked the Committee for their collaboration over the years.

Kelly Gair Evans also introduced Anna Pyles, OSLN STEM Project Specialist, who is attending her first STEM Committee meeting. Anna has worked with Kelly for the past three-and-a-half years and is the mastermind behind the summer Ohio STEM Innovation Summit. She has also taken on all of the logistics behind STEM designation for schools (such as scheduling site visits). Kelly is excited to have Anna at the table to learn about this end of the process.

Discussion Items

POLICY AND COMPLIANCE UPDATES

STATUS OF SCHOOLS CURRENTLY ON GROWTH PLANS (2017 AND EARLIER COHORT)

DECA – Dayton Early College Academy High School

- Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Dayton Early College Academy High School be removed from their corrective action plan and approved for an additional five years of STEM school equivalent designation.
- She said that Dayton Early College Academy High School is exiting their growth plan (corrective action plan) process successfully. DECA is one of two STEM-designated early college high schools in Ohio. They are focused on aligning STEM pedagogy elements with very unique individualized plans for students, especially regarding college and career pathways. Their recommendation letter is in Committee members' folders – hopefully you have a chance to glance over the amazing stuff they're doing.
- Dr. Tom Schwieterman asked what their biggest challenge was in their growth plan. Sandra told him that their pathways are so individualized that the school had to work on cross-disciplinary content with collaboration.
- Motion to remove Dayton Early College Academy High School from their corrective action plan and approve them for an additional five years of STEM school equivalent designation made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Dr. Tom Schwieterman. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

St. Mary School Chardon

- Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that St. Mary School Chardon be removed from their corrective action plan and approved for an additional five years of STEM school equivalent designation.
- Sandra said that St. Mary school completed their growth plan (corrective action plan) process in August and have been very patient waiting for the Committee's vote. St. Mary School is a private school in Northeast Ohio; they are part of the Cleveland diocese and enroll students in kindergarten through eighth grade. They only had one or two focus areas – basically aligning their strong faith-based values with STEM cultural strategies. They had all the elements, but not schoolwide. They really rallied

as a staff, and their community supported them. The Cleveland diocese has been very supportive of their schools seeking designation.

- Motion to remove St. Mary School Chardon from their corrective action plan and approve them for an additional five years of STEM school equivalent designation made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Andy Aichele. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

Thurgood Marshall STEM High School

- Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Thurgood Marshall STEM High School be removed from their corrective action plan and approved for an additional five years of STEM designation.
- Sandra told the Committee that Thurgood Marshall is in the Dayton region and part of Dayton City Schools. They are a true example of how the growth plan (corrective action plan) is used to give the school extended time to meet requirements; they only needed a little more time to finish up the attributes they were working on.
- Sandra added that Dayton Public Schools is a district of STEM. Between when we reviewed their application and when we went on our site visit, Thurgood Marshall had some staff changeover, but even noncertified staff have really embraced a STEM mindset and they are moving forward for all students.
- Motion to remove Thurgood Marshall STEM High School from their corrective action plan and approve them for an additional five years of STEM designation made by Jeremy Varner, seconded by Andy Aichele. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

Springfield High School

- Dr. Sarah Redick told the Committee that Springfield High School, which was placed on a growth plan (corrective action plan) in 2024, has decided not to move forward with their growth plan. They will be focusing on other higher priorities at this time. The Committee will vote to revoke Springfield High School's designation at the end of the school year at our May 2026 meeting.

STATUS OF SCHOOLS CURRENTLY ON GROWTH PLANS (2018 COHORT)

Dr. Sarah Redick updated the Committee about schools currently on growth plans. We will have four schools exiting their growth plan process (including the three the Committee just voted on) and one school opting out of the process (Springfield High School).

Bishop Flaget School, Gesu Catholic School, Orchard STEM School, and STEAMM Academy @ Hartford Middle school are all on track with their progress meetings. Their application deadlines are set and their site visits are scheduled – we will vote on them in May.

2019 SCHOOLS NOT COMPLETING COMPLIANCE APPLICATION

Dorr Elementary School

Dr. Sarah Redick told the Committee that Dorrr Elementary School elected not to complete quality monitoring by not submitting a redesignation application (due April 2025). We have

received signed assurances from the school confirming that they know what the loss of designation means for them. We would have voted for these schools over the summer, so we need to vote on them now. Dr. Tom Swieterman asked that the meeting minutes reflect that this revocation is voluntary (due to a voluntary decision by the school).

Motion made to revoke Dorr Elementary School's STEAM school designation due to declining quality monitoring made by Dr. Tom Swieterman, seconded by Jana Fornario. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

Fairview High School

Dr. Sarah Redick told the Committee that Fairview High School elected not to complete quality monitoring by not submitting a redesignation application (due April 2025). We have received signed assurances from the school confirming that they know what the loss of designation means for them.

Motion made to revoke Fairview High School's STEAM school designation due to declining quality monitoring made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Jeremy Varner. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

SCHOOLS UPDATES

CURRENT DESIGNATION CYCLE

Dr. Sandra Wilder gave an update on the current designation cycle. 2022 was the beginning of compliance for redesignation. In 2022-2024, we went through the designation process for all schools designated in 2017 or earlier. Just last year we completed all those schools (including schools on growth plans). Last year we completed schools designated in 2018. This school year, we are working with three cohorts – schools designated in 2019, 2020, and 2021. At the end of this school year we will finally be out of this cycle. Schools designated in 2021 will be on track for 5-year redesignation. So far, Ashland Christian School, Bath Elementary School, and Gearity Professional Development school have opted out, but they still have time to complete the application for redesignation; we will revisit them in May.

Dr. Tom Swieterman acknowledged that this has been an incredible amount of work; he remembers that meeting when the redesignation process began. OSLN and DEW have done so much work, put in “windshield time,” home time, onsite time, and they redid the whole rubric in the middle of all that. Thank you so much to OSLN and DEW. Dr. Tim said, “Jeremy, I think your team has done some amazing work.” Dr. Sandra Wilder affirmed that we are almost there. Going forward, the Committee will not have to revoke designation – schools can just choose not to participate in the [redesignation] process.

Dr. Tom solicited comments from guests at the meeting, but there were none.

ASPIRING SCHOOLS

Dr. Sarah Redick talked about aspiring schools. This is a new, intermediate step for schools who aren't quite there yet for initial designation. We place them on an informal growth plan. For example, if the school doesn't meet the requirements for three of the rubric attributes, the

school can opt in to the informal growth plan process and submit a second written application for just those three attributes. Similar to a designated school's corrective action plan, the process includes developing SMART goals, having goal progress meetings, talking through action steps, and supporting them through the process. They will complete another Intent to Apply, which will be a checkpoint for them this fall. The application deadline is February 3. All three schools are very excited to be able to participate in this process and know they won't be starting from scratch a second time. The feedback is very good for their staff; they're able to rally staff around specific areas of improvement rather than having to start all over from nothing.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman agreed that this is a very important innovation. It's got a proactive, positive nature. It helps make the STEM Committee more of an enabling body than just a decision-making body. Sarah confirmed that schools are more willing to take the risk of applying knowing there's support and they don't have to start all over if they don't achieve designation on their first try.

Three aspiring schools are currently on growth plans: Crestview Elementary School in Columbiana, Indian Hill Middle School in Cincinnati, and St. Benedict School in Garfield Heights.

STEM AND STEAM SCHOOL REDESIGNATION RECOMMENDATIONS

CHASE STEMM ACADEMY

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Chase STEMM Academy be approved for five additional years of STEM school designation.

Chase STEMM Academy is a public school in the Toledo City School District in Northwest Ohio. They enroll students in grades K-8 and were initially designated in 2019. They are seeking redesignation as a STEM school.

Sandra invited representatives of the school to give remarks. Chase STEMM Academy's principal, Dr. Roxanne Allen, told the Committee that she and Dr. Robin Sheffield, the school's instructional coach, are so happy to be here. This is her sixth year as principal at Chase. She came from high school science teaching in 2020. The STEM designation rubric seemed like a lot. She thanked their school district and superintendent Dr. Romules Durant and said that the district is very forward-thinking when it comes to STEM education. There are four designated schools in the district.

Dr. Allen also thanked OSLN and told the Committee that the Innovative Leaders Institute provided a lot of support to her. Chase is a neighborhood school with no application required for students to attend. Dr. Sheffield provided support for us. It took us three years to get point where we are now. Dr. Tom Schwieterman told Dr. Allen, "We can hear the pride in your voice; that's fun to hear." Dr. Allen said that staff didn't think they could do it – but with the support of OSLN and their monthly leadership calls, we did. Dr. Sarah Redick added that DEW and OSLN appreciate the growth mindset of this school; they were really focused on their areas of growth and took proactive steps to engage with the network.

Motion to approve Chase STEMM Academy for five additional years of STEM school designation made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Jeff Polesovsky. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

CHILLICOTHE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Chillicothe Primary School be approved for five additional years of STEM school designation.

Chillicothe Primary is a public school in Southeast Ohio that serves students in grades K-2 and was initially designated in 2019. They are seeking redesignation as a STEM school.

Sandra invited representatives of the school to give remarks. Mr. Dustin England, the principal, gave a bunch of thank yous to their team, especially Dana Letts, Chillicothe City Schools' Director of Curriculum, and the primary school's STEM Facilitator, Heather Tarlton, both of whom are here today. This is his third year as principal. He said, "My staff does everything that we ask. The rubric is daunting, but they didn't balk." He thanked OSLN for their support and said that the Southeast hub has been very supportive as well. Chillicothe Primary School has a "Muddy Boots and Backpacks" program that takes students into the woods. Dr. Sarah Redick said that the school integrates the Science of Reading/literacy and STEM, although there is a perception throughout the state that those two things can't co-exist. This is their school's superpower. On the site visit, students told her over and over that they loved Muddy Boots and Backpacks.

Jeff Polesovsky asked the school representatives to talk about their relationships with business and industry. Dana Letts said that finding partners was a challenge. Chillicothe's paper mill just closed. We thought about what our community has that no one else has. We don't have a lot of big businesses, but we do have a lot of green space. The parks department is a great partner, and our partnership has benefitted us both. Since partnering with the school, the parks department has gotten more followers on Facebook and is more widely known in the community. The historical society is also a partner (Chillicothe was first state capital of Ohio). These are some unusual "business" partners because we're a K-2 school; a lot of companies/organizations would rather work with older kids and not kindergarten.

Motion to approve Chillicothe Primary School for five additional years of STEM school designation made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Jeremy Varner. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

SHENANDOAH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Shenandoah Elementary School be approved for five additional years of STEM school designation. Noble Local Schools is a fully designated district. Both elementary and high school are STEM designated. They are a very rural district in Southeast Ohio. Both schools were initially designated in 2020. The elementary school serves students in kindergarten through eighth grade. They are seeking redesignation as a STEM school.

Sandra invited representatives of the school to give remarks. The principal, Teresa Gause, said that they have a very good working relationship with the high school. Our elementary school doesn't look like any other school around us. We are proud of our staff. The rubric is hard but it's also full of stuff we already do; we just had to intentionally gather evidence to show it. We are proud of our students. Our curriculum is cross-grade-level and interdisciplinary. Dr. Sandra Wilder said that one of the school's highlights is its relationship to its business advisory council. It's a big deal to leverage a BAC to work with young scholars. Other school districts are adopting these practices because of what Shenandoah Elementary does. Another school is applying for designation because of their collaboration with you. Dr. Tom Schwieterman acknowledged where you come from, your regional efforts, and the size of your school and wants to give extra commendation because of that.

Motion to approve Shenandoah Elementary School for five additional years of STEM school designation made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Jana Fornario. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

SHENANDOAH HIGH SCHOOL

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Shenandoah High School be approved for five additional years of STEM school designation. They were initially designated in 2020 and are seeking redesignation as a STEM school.

Sandra invited representatives of the school to give remarks. Trevor Tom, the principal, spoke. He's in his third year as principal. He said that just being involved with OSLN has been so invigorating for them as a building. They appreciate the network and the fact that an idea that our community thinks is kind of crazy is well supported by others around the state. I am thankful to our staff. The rubric is a lot, and daunting, but at the end of the day it was actually a really easy sell because it's what's best for kids. Our business advisory council is an incredible piece of what we do – our kids have so many opportunities. Dr. Tom Schwieterman asked how many students the high school has. Mr. Tom said they're at about 250. Dr. Tom commented that it's not easy to achieve at such a level at such a small rural school.

Jeff Polesovsky asked if they are mentoring other schools in Southeast Ohio. Mr. Tom replied yes – they host quite a number of schools to visit every year and it's not unusual to see several visits per month. A lot of visitors come to see our farm and the opportunities it provides. STEM is important in our region – agriculture is a big part of who we are. Jeremy Varner asked, "How do you build apprenticeships in this rural setting?" Mr. Tom answered that they focus on what we can do for the business partner, and not what they can do for us. We lean heavily on our BAC. Graham Wood encouraged Committee members to "keep all this in the back of your mind for our conversation later." Dr. Sarah Redick said the students we talked to on the site visit were amazing; she asked the principal if he prepped the kids because their one word to describe their school, for many, was "community" – the STEM community, their local community, their school community.

Motion to approve Shenandoah High School for five additional years of STEM school designation made by Jeff Polesovsky, seconded by Dr. Tom Schwieterman. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Tom Schwieterman introduced Dr. Chris Woolard, the chief integration officer at the Department of Education and Workforce. Chris told the Committee that he thinks he's interacted with everyone here at some point. He is working with artificial intelligence right now. DEW's thoughts on AI are quickly evolving. It was really Lieutenant Governor Husted who drove this. The state agencies are partnering on how we are going to do it. We put out an in-depth toolkit for districts a couple of years ago to help them think about AI policies. The coalition started last year and met over the course of the year. Central question: What does industry need and what do students need to know?

We looked at the impacts on students of AI use, and also operational aspects. The coalition's report was released last November with recommendations. Chris is trying to use the coalition and strategy document to move forward. Recommendations for districts, higher education (one recommendation) and the state. For districts, we made three recommendations that early adopters are already doing. There is now some sort of committee or task force looking at AI in every district. All districts need to implement an AI use policy (now required by the state budget bill) and provide opportunities to build AI literacy for all educators in the district. Higher education institutions are adding AI to their educator preparation programs. We are working to add to technology standards, incorporating ISTE standards, to all content areas.

DEW is continuing to think through how we can provide resources to build AI policies throughout the state. This is a workforce issue. We have 1.6 million students in Ohio. The world is quickly changing – we need to make sure our students are prepared for that. By July 1, 2026, every district in the state has to have an AI use policy (per the budget bill). The state is required to put a model policy together by December 31. We will hopefully be able to share that in next few weeks, ahead of the deadline. We are also working on a supporting set of resources. The federal government has been very clear that you can use Title funds to support AI efforts. AI can also include special education tools (supporting writing IEPs, etc.), so we will need guidelines and considerations for them. We are also continuing to look for partnerships (for example, we are partnering with Intel on use-case modules for students, especially in computer science classes). The responsible use of AI is a workforce issue. This is our statement from the state that this is important.

Andy Aichele said that COSI's workforce development program incorporates AI as a tool. There is a lot of fear, so much of the work is getting them to try. Dr. Tom Schwieterman said that Midmark is looking at their workforce from an AI perspective – asking, “Can this role be augmented with AI?”

STEM COMMITTEE INNOVATION SESSION

BEFORE WE START: OVERVIEW OF OHIO STEM LEARNING NETWORK ANNUAL REPORT

Kelly Gaier Evans shared highlights of OSLN's annual report with the Committee. All Committee members received a hard copy of the report. This year, OSLN reached 1,021 schools and districts, 2,722 educators, and 349,334 students in 84 counties in Ohio. The gap is closing for rural schools from designation to “Ignite STEM.”

We tripled our reach and built systematic supports, especially partnerships/businesses, and increased STEM identity and community). One of our questions going forward is how we expand recognition beyond schoolwide models of STEM (i.e., designation). How do we make professional development low-cost and on-demand for districts/schools that don't have a lot of resources?

Kelly said that OSLN's four opportunities for the future are to expand recognition beyond schoolwide models of STEM, conduct longitudinal impact analysis, increase access to STEM professional learning, and deepen alignment to state workforce needs/initiatives.

D. Tom Schwieterman said that these four opportunities are very powerful and what he would like to focus on.

Jeff Polesovsky shared that he's on the partnership relationship side (businesses). How do we track some of those as well so we can show companies what we're doing and what they can do? How many businesses out there don't even know what a partnership looks like? We need a way to track student success once they leave – are they going on to work for a company that partnered with their school? This will help us show businesses how impactful that is. Kelly Gaier Evans said that this is something we should absolutely be digging in to. Andy Aichele added that this is a statewide call to the workforce; businesses/companies are not just helping their local school, they are seeding their workforce.

INNOVATION SESSION

Dr. Tom Schwieterman and Graham Wood spoke to the Committee about the desire to engage in discussion around the following driving question:

What workforce needs and state initiatives are you currently engaged in that the STEM team should be aware of, connecting to, and finding ways to support?

Dr. Tom said that we have a lot of energy here and a lot of enthusiasm. We have the opportunity to make the Committee something bigger and better than it has been. We've been riding the coattails of DEW and OSLN; I think we can do our own wayfinding and advancing STEM as a whole.

Graham spoke about the Office of Graduate Success at DEW. In the past, its focus has been on pathways leading *to* graduation. Now we are focusing on pathways *through* graduation. He said, "We are lucky enough that in February of last year the STEM team joined our office. I have been a thorn in everyone's side by asking a lot of questions – why are we doing this? What's the point?" The STEM Committee meetings felt very different from the work we're doing. This is an opportunity for this group to engage in long-term strategy conversations.

He continued, "I sit firmly on the workforce side of our organization." We hear about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics jobs, and STEM education prepares students for that, but also so much more. Students need to be able to think, write, and show up for work on a regular basis with agency. JobsOhio will not stop banging down our door about engineering technologies and advanced manufacturing. We want to open up opportunities for kids (not quite just what the workforce needs).

Slightly edited question for the Committee:

What workforce needs and state initiatives might inform future STEM education efforts in Ohio?

Graham affirmed that the State STEM Committee can build a vision for STEM in Ohio.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman opened the conversation by saying, “I’ve never seen an initiative so deeply focused and rooted as our artificial intelligence work within Midmark Corporation.” We have two licenses for large language models (LLMs); we’ve developed two workshops on prompt engineering. Midmark is launching a brand-new innovation center in Cincinnati. It can’t happen fast enough. We have open opportunities on our corporation’s engineering webpage; we are starved for talent. It’s never been more real or more tangible to our success and growth as a company. It’s a whole different ball game. It’s not only front & center, it’s the theme of the whole show.

Andy Aichele told the Committee that COSI has launched many initiatives since the Committee last met. We’ve done HIVE (Human InnoVation Experience) pilots over the course of the summer funded by the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio. We did roadshows in seven middle schools. Each county is very different. The program is customized to those regions, and includes representatives from industry in those counties. The event showcases those industries (it’s not a job fair, but talking about industries and careers on a broad spectrum). We have a great partnership with DEW for this program – participating students receive an “I Can and I Will” badge that puts them on the path to earn the Ohio Readiness Seal for graduation. Middle school students are starting to tell and hear stories about how they are or are not a STEM student, how they are or are not good at math. During this program, students can ask industry professionals about what it’s really like to work on (fill in the blank). We try to get students to think about the one thing they’re going to do next – talk to their guidance counselor? Talk to Mom and Dad? Talk to a teacher?

We are now taking this roadshow statewide through other partnerships. We want to get to all 88 counties in the next several years. We want to make STEM fun and engaging, hands-on and accessible. What’s in students’ own communities (“What’s that building we pass every day? We have scientists in our community?”)? Ohio has amazing resources for students to be able to stay right here and do what they want to do. The Department of Children and Youth is approaching the challenge of early childhood education, with everyone from home daycares to degreed early childhood professionals. How do we support them in STEM education? COSI will have four big professional development events at our building over the course of this year and have a roadshow to go to some cities around the state (not the biggest cities, but “secondary markets”). How do we give these teachers an experience to explore STEM in a safe space? Nobody wants to tell people they’re afraid of science. COSI is also working on online modules for CEUs. Our mission is to engage and inspire wherever our communities are.

Graham Wood said that he’s seen COSI touch on those points in their HIVE program. Career awareness exploration is where the Office of Graduate Success is spending a lot of our time these days. We created Career Pathway Support Networks (aligned with JobsOhio regions), and in this two-year grant cycle, we’re asking them to upskill folks around the state in career advising. Money is a real question for schools to be able to do that. Career exploration can’t be a separate thing from what students are doing every day in the classroom – STEM education

requires deep integration of these concepts. The reality we're hearing from schools is "We can't do this alone; we can't do this without help."

Jeff Polesovsky asked, "Whose responsibility is it and who does it the best?" Jeff is really high on that regional network approach. Who's in the middle? Who's going to actually make the connection between students and companies? Jeremy Varner said that DEW is still in the process of setting up the Career Pathway Support Networks. We want to ensure that students are leaving middle school knowing about what opportunities are out there.

Jeff said that newly created jobs in Ohio need lots of skilled employees. We need to pool our efforts to solve this. We need to build out pathways that are more systemic and schools and partners need to understand that they can't do this alone. We need to break traditions and get rid of parochialism. We have investors to support economic development – they can invest in schools and STEM education in the same way?

Dr. Tom Schwieterman agreed that there is not a clear path for industry both to invest and to participate. Can we work on direct monetary investment in education? Graham Wood answered that Career Pathway Support Networks can be kind of a hub for businesses to learn about opportunities. In Southwest Ohio, there's an Adopt-a-Class program – career partners come into elementary and middle schools to engage/teach lessons to students. This is funded by private philanthropy and business. He added that businesses need to be a little uncomfortable in order to think through that. Involvement helps their own employee development also. There is a direct way to engage that exists in Southwest Ohio.

Jana Fornario had to leave the meeting early. She asked Jenny Russell to pose the following to the Committee: "My biggest interest with the STEM Committee is to understand the impact our STEM schools are having. I would love to see how they fare on the report cards in aggregate and relative to other tools, would love to include report card data information in [Committee] packets when we vote [on designation], and would love to try to figure out a way to get more longitudinal information on how STEM students fare."

Dr. Tom Schwieterman agreed that data is very useful. Jeff Polesivsky addressed the room and asked if any schools here now are tracking students who are leaving. Do we do a good job of this? The Dayton Regional STEM School superintendent, Dr. Robin Fisher, told the Committee that it's very difficult to track students. We maybe have data for around a quarter of our graduates. One of our staff members' role is to track students. We are hoping to learn how many students persist or major in STEM fields once they leave. Initial data is positive; engagement is higher, but she doesn't know how accurate that data is.

Graham Wood said that we are making efforts at the state level to collect this information. There are privacy concerns because a student's Social Security is often the ticket to tracking. We do have some data, and we were able to bring some data to our June work session with OSLN and Dr. Tom Schwieterman. Dr. Tom was alarmed at some of the data. Schools that look great on report cards – their students' data six years out of high school is not so great. Jeremy Varner said that 68% of students six years out of high school don't have a degree (associate's or higher), so a lot of students can't be tracked through postsecondary enrollment, and they need to be prepared for the workforce without a degree. Only one in three students go

through career exploration and planning. We do have some National Student Clearinghouse data. Jeremy said that he is working on a report of that data to be hopefully released this spring. We want to get that data in the hands of local decision-makers to inform their focus. Anna Pyles asked if that data will be publicly available. Graham Wood clarified that this would be a dashboard, not a static report. It would be accessible by business advisory councils, business leaders, and JobsOhio.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman encouraged the STEM Committee to dig heavily into that when that data becomes available.

He asked if any of the meeting attendees had any comments.

Manika Williams with the Ohio National Guard told the Committee that it's sometimes overlooked that the National Guard has quite a few CTE STEM careers that we offer lots of full scholarships/financial aid for. As an example, the National Guard has a \$50,000 sign-on bonus to be a plumber or welder. The Ohio National Guard is a viable option for a career. She added that many folks are unaware of National Guard bases right around them. She would like to see how the National Guard can be better workforce partners with the Department of Education and Workforce and the STEM community. Ohio had the first cyber-guard wing in the nation; the wing in Mansfield is looking for information technology folks to join. Manika is happy to come back and share with the Committee.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman suggested that maybe we should have someone on the Committee who is in a job-oriented career. Graham Wood said that the team is working on this.

Dayton Regional STEM School Spotlight

Dr. Robin Fisher, superintendent, and Jen Reid, PBL coach, welcomed Committee members and guests to Dayton Regional STEM School. They are happy to share more about their school with the Committee.

Jen Reid started by saying that all their ninth grade students take a Principles of Computer Science course. Ninth graders are working on an AI-integrated project this year. The robotics teacher and math teacher are also working on the project. It is completely integrated into all disciplines/areas. They will host an AI symposium at Sinclair Community College as the final product of the course.

Dr. Robin Fisher said that she loves their network and is so glad DRSS can be a hub – we are so much better when we are collaborating with local schools. We want the Committee to know that designation is really hard on teachers; there's such a shortage of teachers. We like our teachers to visit other schools. As we were planning and designing our elementary school (which opened this year), we visited Chase STEMM Academy in Toledo and they were really helpful.

Dayton Regional STEM School is one of the original five STEM schools that opened in 2009. We have been reinventing our school over the last 16 years. Robin has been able to be here since they opened. After the meeting, everyone will have the opportunity to tour the school if you want to; students will take you on a tour. Our school started with ninth grade and 75 students.

We have over 1,000 students now in grades K-12. We have lottery-based admission with students from nine counties. It's been quite an adventure to open our elementary school. Thank you to the Committee for allowing our elementary school designation. Starting practices in elementary school is critical for the future career decisions students will be making. We want little kids who don't feel represented in STEM to see that they can do this, too. We don't want to close any doors for them.

As part of our Pathways to Success in Careers domain [in the STEM designation rubric and quality model], we have a 250-hour work-based learning requirement for all high school students. All students must have an internship. People said it was impossible to find positions and partners for all students, but we persisted and we did it.

The Five STEM Qualities of DRSS are communication, inquiry, creativity, persistence, and collaboration.

STEM Committee Meeting Schedule

Dr. Sarah Redick spoke about the upcoming 2025-2026 STEM Committee meeting schedule. The winter meeting will be held on Thursday, February 19, at a location yet to be determined. The spring meeting will be held on Thursday, May 14 at the Department of Education and Workforce in Columbus.

Jenny Russell reminded Committee members to please fill out their hard-copy information forms before they leave today.

Public Comments

Public comments throughout the meeting are captured above.

Closing

In closing, Dr. Tom Schwieterman said that he would like to continue the conversation about innovation with the Committee about how we can move forward. He added that he is looking forward to adding a few more members to the Committee. Jeremy Varner thanked the Committee for participating and said that this is a good start.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the STEM Committee meeting made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Dr. Tom Schwieterman. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman adjourned the meeting at 11:24 a.m.

The next STEM Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, February 19, 2026 at a location yet to be determined.