

Ohio STEM Committee Meeting Minutes

FEBRUARY 19, 2026

9:00 – 11:30 A.M.

MARYSVILLE STEM EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

833 N. MAPLE ST., MARYSVILLE, OHIO 43040

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 (appointed by the Governor)

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

Lauren Massie, Director of Workforce Services, Ohio Manufacturers' Association (appointed by the Governor)

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

Jeff Polesovsky, Executive Vice President of External Affairs, 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)

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PRESENT

Graham Wood, Administrator, Office of Graduate Success

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

Cathy Holmes, Education Program Specialist

Jenny Russell, STEM Program Administrator

Diane Allen, Ph.D., Deputy Director, Division of Primary and Secondary Education

OHIO STEM LEARNING NETWORK PRESENT

Sandra Wilder, Ph.D., Director

Sandy Guinto, STEM Relationship Manager

Anna Pyles, STEM Project Specialist

OTHERS PRESENT

Brad Yeager, Northeast Ohio Impact Academy
Kristin Fox, Northeast Ohio Impact Academy
Ralf Urbach, Northeast Ohio Impact Academy
Lisa Gothard, East Canton High School
David Samblanet, East Canton High School
Christina Ramsey, McKinley STEMM Academy, Toledo Public Schools
Andrea Bennett, McKinley STEMM Academy, Toledo Public Schools
Sunaina Kelly, Franklin Elementary School
Jessica Chada, Franklin Elementary School
Kelly Laib, Franklin Elementary School
Scott Hawley, Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School
Oktay Ince, Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School
Ugur Zengince, Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School
Ali Kucuker, Concept Schools
Ryan Pjesky, Saint Vincent-Saint Mary High School
David Fischer, St. Paul, Salem
Sheila Ross, OAIS
John Sherwood, JobsOhio

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 9:06 a.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made to approve the February 19, 2026 STEM Committee meeting agenda made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Andy Aichele.
All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 21, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

Motion made to approve the November 21, 2025 STEM Committee meeting minutes made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Jeremy Varner.
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. He said

that it's always great to be on site to see real work in context. Thank you for hosting. Graham Wood introduced new STEM Committee member Lauren Massie, Director of Workforce Services at the Ohio Manufacturers' Association. Graham said, "We are so excited to have you here." Graham told the Committee, "I've been working with Lauren for a number of years and we're excited for the representation she brings from OMA (the Ohio Manufacturers' Association), especially with a lot of the workforce conversations we've been having. We're glad to have you in the room." Graham then thanked Marysville Early College High School for hosting the STEM Committee meeting. He added that Dr. Diane Allen is here today; she is a former superintendent here in Marysville.

Lauren Massie thanked everyone for their welcome and said that, on behalf of OMA, she's happy to be a part of the work. STEM education is so important in growing and protecting manufacturing.

Graham Wood welcomed Cathy Holmes, Science Education Program Specialist in the Office of Academic Success at the Department of Education and Workforce. He gave a special thank you to Cathy for all the work she's done this year. She is an active member of the DEW team supporting science education; this past year we asked her for help/support on our STEM team. Graham told Cathy, "We're so glad to have you here today to see the fruit of some of the work you've been doing." Cathy Holmes told the Committee that it's been a delight; she's seen the work from the outside but it's very rewarding to go into schools and see kids and see what's happening. Graham Wood added that at DEW, we're a couple steps away from schools, so any time we can provide opportunities to go into schools that's a good thing.

Mr. Scott Bennet, principal, welcomed Committee members and guests to Marysville STEM Early College High School. Since the school is on a two-hour delay this morning, the student advisory board will present to the Committee at the end of the meeting.

Discussion Items

POLICY AND COMPLIANCE UPDATES

REVISED OHIO STEM AND STEAM DESIGNATION RUBRIC

Overview

- Dr. Sarah Redick told the Committee that every year the DEW STEM team and OSLN do an annual review to update the rubric for language, formatting, and to make sure it meets the needs of stakeholders. After talking to STEM schools and hearing from the community, we have now included an additional rubric rating.
 - There is a crosswalk in Committee members' folders featuring a summary of the changes. Ratings are now emerging, establishing, executing, and exceeding, for going above and beyond what's required. The Committee will need to vote on this item [adding this rating to the rubric]. We are hoping to push the updated rubric out to schools next week. We already have content ready to

support schools, and we have prepared a webinar and an all-day “deep dive” session for schools.

- Dr. Tom Schwieterman told the Committee that this rubric has been a huge amount of work over the last five years. The exceeding category is really, really important. Certain schools just go above and beyond. This recognizes those schools in a way that’s objective and we can rely upon. Over time, I am hoping the Committee can award some kind of excellence ratings (we’re not there yet). Thank you so much for all your work.
- Jana Fornario said that she wasn't here for all the work. She spoke about computer science and said that not all technology is created equal. There is a lot on the impact of technology on student brains. She said she is speaking of “modern technology” broadly and asked to what extent we are drilling down to see it’s really benefitting students.
- Dr. Sarah Redick answered that there is no minimum required rating for technology/computer science in the rubric because it’s not in the ORC, although it is important for model STEM schools. She added that this is actually a perfect segue. We’ve developed a Quality Model that expands on what we mean by “modern technology.” The team did try to create something that’s evergreen, so modern tech is very broadly defined. We gathered feedback from the field. Our Quality Model shouldn’t be something that’s immediately dated. We don’t call out AI or tell schools how to use technology because that’s not our role – we’re not giving them the “how-to;” there’s other state guidance around that. Dr. Sandra Wilder added that we didn't want to box ourselves in.
- Jana replied that’s very helpful. She has one thing she wants to say, and that’s we want to see technology being intentionally integrated in a way that’s going to support student learning (just an observation from her). Be careful about saying technology is important without being thoughtful about it. Sandra replied that the rubric attributes are around using technology to solve problems and having students identify what technology to use. We want to apply technology tools rather than just use them. That’s the intent. Jana thanked her and told Sandra that’s very helpful.
- Motion to adopt revised Ohio STEM and STEAM Designation Rubric made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Andy Aichele. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

Graham Wood welcomed Dr. Diane Allen, Deputy Director of the Division of Primary and Secondary Education at the Department of Education and Workforce, who arrived a little late. Dr. Allen leads a dedicated team focused on Ohio’s education priorities of raising literacy achievement, accelerating student learning, fostering student wellness, and strengthening workforce readiness. Most recently serving as superintendent of the Marysville Exempted Village School District, Dr. Allen is a leader who charted a course of innovation, strategic development, and achievement. She guided the implementation of programs that resulted in more meaningful learning experiences for students. From expanding advanced coursework offerings to establishing robust career pathways, she built a system that emphasizes a

student's personal needs while staying focused on the demands of an ever-evolving workforce. Graham thanked Dr. Allen for being here.

Dr. Diane Allen admitted, "I did kind of weasel my own invite when I heard you were coming to Marysville. I'm excited in my new role, trying to extend opportunities like we're going to see here in Marysville. It's good to be back but I'm very happy in my new job."

UPDATED OHIO QUALITY MODEL FOR STEM AND STEAM EDUCATION

Overview

- Dr. Sarah Redick said that this updated Quality Model was published back in the fall; it's a support document, so it's not an item that requires a vote. We want the Committee to be aware that we are supporting schools not just interested in designation, but in implementing best practices in STEM education. We had a well-attended webinar when we rolled this out. We are also doing a series of conference presentations, with partners and OSLN, at SECO and science teacher conferences, and doing outreach to the largest districts (specific).
- Dr. Tom Schwieterman said that there are three main pathways to success. There is incorporation of industry. The last domain is underdeveloped but I feel like it's becoming more developed. We have to think about how to more effectively bring in businesses and companies. Industry is waiting for schools to come to them and we would like to reverse that – these are the types of thinking we need for success. It's currently dominating our discussions at Midmark.
- Lauren Massie said that her organization is listening to AI conversation. The Ohio Manufacturers' Association worked with manufacturing to develop our model. We have worked with many partners in the room to match schools and industry together. We're working on ways to introduce and "matchmake" those folks because it's so important.
- Dr. Tom commended the group on further developing the Quality Model. He said that with Domain 3, this is essentially Jeremy Varner's role in the state because it's so important. Graham Wood shared that when he stepped into this role supporting the STEM team close to a year ago, he was external to the team, and had a binary look at STEM. Schools are designated – or they're not. The Quality Model shows folks there are so many different levels to this. Educators and schools don't have to dive into the deep end; they can start small and it doesn't have to be schoolwide.

STATUS OF SCHOOLS CURRENTLY ON GROWTH PLANS

Dr. Sarah Redick updated the Committee about schools currently on growth plans. We have one school exiting their growth plan process and three schools on track with their progress meetings and engaged in the growth plan process. Two applications are due in March and one is due over the summer and we'll do that site visit in the fall. We're confident that they're putting together strong applications. Dr. Sandra Wilder added that every school that's completed a growth plan has been successful.

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Gesu Catholic School be removed from their corrective action plan and approved for an additional five years of STEAM school equivalent designation.

Sandra said that Gesu only had three attributes in their plan; they worked closely with Sarah and I and the staff really rallied around these goals.

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

SCHOOLS UPDATES

CURRENT DESIGNATION CYCLE

Dr. Sandra Wilder gave an update on the current designation cycle. We're in the final year of our first five-year redesignation cycle. After this school year, every designated school will have gone through the redesignation process using the updated rubric. We're voting on most of those schools today, but a few will be voted on in May. The application closed two weeks ago. We received applications for initial designation from nine schools this year: St. Benedict School in Northeast Ohio; South Side Academy and Crestview Elementary School in the Akron region; Barnesville Elementary School, Caldwell Elementary School, and Fairfield Middle School in Southeast Ohio; Noble Local Academy and Horizon Science Academy Middle School in Central Ohio; and Indian Hill Middle School in Southwest Ohio. We are happy to see schools from Southeast Ohio, and we hope we will see more in the southwest as we continue work across the region. Three of these schools went for initial designation last year – they didn't meet all attributes, but the Committee approved informal growth plans for initial designation a year ago and these are the first schools to do it. They needed to reapply only for attributes they didn't meet last year.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman said that what's nice about this is it lowers the burden of the reapplication process since most of the work has been done. Sandra said that the process has been so well received by our aspiring schools. It's an intermediate step – we are living the STEM mindset. Dr. Tom added that it feels right for the ability to do a good and thorough evaluation. Sandra said that there is a step required before the application is submitted – the Intent to Apply form. We have conversations with these schools to assess their state of STEM. Sometimes schools decide to wait a year and avail themselves of technical support.

STEM AND STEAM SCHOOL REDESIGNATION RECOMMENDATIONS

MARSHALL STEMM ACADEMY

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Marshall STEMM Academy be placed on a corrective action plan (growth plan).

Marshall 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 2021. They are seeking redesignation as a STEM school. Areas of strength that the review team noted are a very strong culture and invested and robust community partners. They need a little more work in insuring schoolwide practice and authentic audiences.

Motion to place Marshall STEMM Academy on a corrective action plan made by Jeremy Varner, seconded by Jana Fornario. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

MCKINLEY STEM ACADEMY IN STEUBENVILLE

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that McKinley STEM Academy in Steubenville be placed on a corrective action plan (growth plan).

McKinley STEM Academy is a public school in the Steubenville School District in Southeast Ohio. They enroll students in grades K-4 and were initially designated in 2020. They are seeking redesignation as a STEM school. They have a strong culture and strong partnerships. They do have interdisciplinary, hands-on STEM experiences; they just need to align them with their core values and make them intentional. We're not worried about this school being able to meet the requirements.

Motion to place McKinley STEM Academy in Steubenville on a corrective action plan made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Jana Fornario. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

HERBERT MILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Herbert Mills Elementary School be placed on a corrective action plan (growth plan).

Herbert Mills Elementary School is a public school in the Reynoldsburg City School District in Central Ohio. They enroll students in grades K-5 and were initially designated in 2019. They are seeking redesignation as a STEAM school. Sandra started by telling the Committee that this final recommendation is a little different; there is not a letter in your folder if you're looking for it. The school was an active member of OSLN earlier this school year, and school leadership reached out to OSLN and raised concerns about putting together a robust collection of artifacts. They are worried that some of their practices are not up to par. It's an unusual situation – they did not submit an application for redesignation. This is what a growth plan is designed for; they need more support. We didn't do a formal site visit as part of the redesignation process, but we visited the school and met with school leaders and students, and the district's elementary curriculum director and assistant superintendent. We are working with them on all twelve attributes of the rubric. Dr. Tom Schwieterman asked what is fresh vs. what is regular redesignation. The STEM Committee approved them for redesignation pending quality monitoring. Sandra said that they have followed the regular timeline for redesignation.

Motion to place Herbert Mills Elementary School on a corrective action plan made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Jeremy Varner. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

EAST CANTON HIGH SCHOOL

Sandy Guinto told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that East Canton High School be approved for five additional years of STEM school designation.

East Canton High School is a public school in the Osnaburg Local School District in the Akron region. They enroll students in grades 9-12 and were initially designated in 2019. They are seeking redesignation as a STEM school. Sandy had the honor of visiting earlier this year.

Sandy invited representatives of the school to give remarks. David Sanborn, the district's STEM coordinator, and Lisa Goddard, STEM teacher/coach, said they started their STEM program ten years ago. We took our freshman team through an integrated teaching and learning course with Sandra and that was crucial to our development. We're a small district with 250 kids in our high school which gives flexibility but also has its own challenges. STEM has created a completely different learning environment for our kids.

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

FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Sandy Guinto told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Franklin Elementary School be approved for five additional years of STEM school designation.

Franklin Elementary School is a public school in the Wadsworth City School District in the Akron region. They enroll students in grades K-4 and were initially designated in 2019. They are seeking redesignation as a STEM school. Their superpower is integrated and authentic problem-based learning experiences leveraging partners.

Sandy invited representatives of the school to give remarks. Principal Sunaina Kelly, Kelly Laib, and second-grade teacher Jessica Chada thanked the Committee for recognizing them. They said that to our bones we feel like every kid deserves and should have the best school experience, and that experience is STEM education. We want students to leave school a better person, and STEM is the way to do it. Kids need to be successful for the rest of their lives. Our STEM priority will not change. Sandy said that their principal truly leads by example.

Motion to approve Franklin Elementary School for five additional years of STEM school designation made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Dr. Tom Schwieterman. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

HORIZON SCIENCE ACADEMY COLUMBUS HIGH SCHOOL

Sandy Guinto told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School be approved for five additional years of STEAM school equivalent designation.

Horizon Science Academy is a community school in Central Ohio. They enroll students in grades 9-12 and were initially designated in 2021. They are seeking redesignation as a STEAM school equivalent.

Sandy invited representatives of the school to give remarks. Oktay Ince is the STEM Coordinator. The principals of both campuses, Scott Hawley of the Morse Rd. campus (grades 9-10) and Ugur Zengince of the Westerville campus (grades 11-12) thanked the Committee for recognizing their school. They provide opportunities for Columbus students – because all students deserve access to STEM. 100% of their students are eligible for Title One and free and reduced lunch. These students deserve higher standards that we offer through STEM education. Sandy said that they have amazing partnerships. Dr. Tom Schwieterman told the school leaders that [STEAM designation] is a real achievement in the community you serve – it's a heavier lift for you than many other schools. Oktay said Horizon is working with other states to be a model of STEM education. Dr. Sarah Redick added that one of their students told her their experience at school has been life-changing.

Motion to approve Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School for five additional years of STEAM school equivalent designation made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Jeremy Varner. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

MCKINLEY STEMM ACADEMY IN TOLEDO

Sandy Guinto told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that McKinley STEMM Academy in Toledo be approved for five additional years of STEAM school designation.

McKinley STEMM Academy is a public school in the Toledo Public School District in Northwest Ohio. They enroll students in grades K-8 and were initially designated in 2020. They are seeking redesignation as a STEAM school. They really focus on authentic learning experiences.

Sandy invited representatives of the school to give remarks. Christina Ramsey, principal, and Andrea Bennett, instructional coach, thanked the Committee for recognizing us today for the work we do. Christina said that they are extremely proud to be moving from STEM to STEAM and integrating the arts. We are an urban district and we're intentional about making sure we're connecting our students to the community so they can see what exists outside their own neighborhood. We are making intentional choices about high school education. Some students leave us as early as sixth grade to go to a Toledo magnet school. We are proud that they feel like they have a place at the table and that they really belong in those STEM environments. Andrea told the Committee that their students worked with the Toledo Area Transit Authority. Students were tasked with coming up with an idea for a decommissioned vehicle to meet the needs of the community. Students came up with what community needs they wanted to tackle. Part of that was initiated by TARDA themselves; they asked students to create a bus wrap promoting their summer youth pass. We would like to see that bus at our STEAM night so students can see that their idea was implemented.

Motion to approve McKinley STEMM Academy in Toledo for five additional years of STEAM school designation made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Dr. Tom Schwieterman. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

NORTHEAST OHIO IMPACT ACADEMY

Sandy Guinto told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Northeast Ohio Impact Academy be approved for five additional years of STEM school designation.

Northeast Ohio Impact Academy is a public school in the Campbell City School District in the Akron region. They enroll students in grades 8-12 and were initially designated in 2019. They are seeking redesignation as a STEM school. Sandy said that they have a strong culture of personalized learning.

Sandy invited representatives of the school to give remarks. Brad Yeager, principal; Kristin Fox, assistant principal; and Ralf Urbach, STEM and Manufacturing Director, spoke to the Committee. They thanked OSLN for this recommendation and said that Sandy's been a great help with coaching them through the process. They have a diverse community and are running out of space. 100% of their students qualify for free lunch. The principal said that our kids are always changing their interests and we are constantly evolving. They know how to do what they need to do to tailor their strengths and interests. There are not too many high schools in Northeast Ohio where you can graduate with a STEM diploma. Sandy said that she was very fortunate to be able to visit the school; it stuck with me that a student said she was into digital art and there was no class for me her, but she figured out when she could go into the lab to learn. The students are all met where they need.

Motion to approve Northeast Ohio Impact Academy for five additional years of STEM school designation made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Jeremy Varner. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

ST. PAUL SCHOOL

Sandy Guinto told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that St. Paul School be approved for five additional years of STEM school equivalent designation.

St. Paul School is a private school within the Catholic Diocese of Youngstown. They enroll students in grades K-8 and were initially designated in 2020. They are seeking redesignation as a STEM school equivalent. They offer great community problem-based learning experiences. They have gone through transitions this year but made sure they met every mark for redesignation.

Sandy invited representatives of the school to give remarks. David Fisher, principal, started in October. He said, "Being new, I jumped right in and had the assistance of everyone." We have 92 students and are located in a poor rural county. We believe in the power of yes for our students. Thank you.

Motion to approve St. Paul School for five additional years of STEM school equivalent designation made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Andy Aichele. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

Sandy Guinto thanked all of the schools that managed to come to the STEM Committee meeting; we know how hard it is to leave the building. Thanks for showing the Committee what it means to be a STEM school.

DESIGNATION ADDENDUM RECOMMENDATION

ST. VINCENT-ST. MARY HIGH SCHOOL

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending the approval of the addendum for St. Vincent-St. Mary High School to modify their current designation from STEM to STEAM.

St. Vincent-St. Mary High School is a private school within the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. They enroll students in grades 9-12 and were initially designated in 2025. They are seeking to modify their current STEM school equivalent designation to STEAM school equivalent designation. They applied for redesignation just last year and shared their desire to become STEAM designated, integrating art across all curriculum and grade levels.

Sandra invited representatives of the school to give remarks. Ryan Pjesky, STEAM director and science teacher, said “This has been a three-year process for me, with redesignation and now designation as STEAM.” Last year our art department was kind of crushed when we didn’t get the A. We steered them into believing that this is a great opportunity for us to spend a year to build a good foundation with art for the entire school. We spent the summer with the book “Your Brain on Art.” It’s dense and science-y and is about what art does to the mind and body. When we got back to school we looked at defining our why for a STEAM/art-integrated school. It came down to looking at our mission to educate the “whole person.” What does that really mean? Self-expression is the core of art – creating something, not fearing failure. We went through art standards 101 for the whole staff. Teachers developed an art lens for lesson planning. We are restoring the art of teaching (the needle is bent toward the science of teaching).

Motion to modify St. Vincent-St. Mary High School’s STEM school equivalent designation to STEAM school equivalent designation made by Jeremy Varner, seconded by Jana Fornario. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that this addendum does not change the school’s designation year.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Graham Wood introduced John Sherwood, Director of Talent Strategy at JobsOhio. Graham told the Committee that John’s presentation is a follow-up to a conversation that they had in Dayton in November. We started to have some conversation around STEM education as a piece of the workforce development pie. Graham hears from JobsOhio about STEM careers all the time, so John is here to speak to the Committee about connecting STEM education and STEM workforce. Graham said he thinks the Committee can also have some conversation

around this, too, and maybe set some theoretical direction for our Department from the Committee.

John started by saying that he has been at JobsOhio for five years. He's worked in the DeWine-Husted administration in the Office of Workforce Transformation. He was tasked with turning campaign promises into real programs. Before that, he worked with manufacturing at Columbus State Community College.

John told the Committee that at this education level, it's hard to see the day-to-day connection to the workforce. I work with Graham a lot. This team you have here – Jeremy, Graham, and Leah – are wonderful partners in workforce development. Ninety percent of the pipeline is some form of manufacturing these days. Ohio has strength in career-technical education and STEM education.

John said that most people think “OhioMeansJobs” when they hear JobsOhio, but we are separate. JobsOhio is a private, nonprofit (501C4) organization founded in 2011 as part of a campaign promise from John Kasich. It has privatized a function that has traditionally been part of the state government. Because we are not part of government, we are not subject to sunshine laws. The future plans of publicly-traded companies need to be private. We have a logical revenue model – a long-term lease on the state's liquor business (licensing) until 2053. Our funds are secure long term, which is an advantage for Ohio.

JobsOhio concentrates on wealth-generating industry – money coming into the state, not just moving around the state. We want to be moving at the speed of business. When private corporations grow, individuals and families succeed. Our strategic plan for the next five years focuses on five super-sectors. Some of the best jobs you can get right now without a two-year associate's degree or four-year bachelor's degrees are operating jobs in biomanufacturing. The pathways and advancement are great. It's an opportunity for high school graduates to get a job and make family-supporting wages immediately.

Ohio needs a more skilled workforce. How do we fill the need for technicians? This is a big research question for JobsOhio. We don't want to make assumptions about causes and what's really needed. Time and time again, I sit in meetings about the problems with manufacturing. Everyone thinks it's dark, dirty, and dangerous work, but our research shows that's not really true. Kids don't necessarily have a bad perception of manufacturing careers, they just don't know about them. Data proves that the biggest influence on individuals is people they know personally (so for students, we're talking about parents, friends, counselors, etc.). Five years from now we want to make sure every teacher, administrator, and student attends a manufacturing day or industrial tour. This is highly influential in career choices.

Graham Wood added that this is research that DEW has seen and is starting to apply. Dr. Tom Schwieterman remarked that there's a lot of data around manufacturing and statewide wealth generation. When you have a business model at this level, you can start to talk about more powerful things. Our success begets our success and vice versa. Finding a way to augment each other's success would be just synergistic.

Dr. Tom said that a bachelor's of science in engineering is still a golden ticket to the upper middle class in this country. We can't de-emphasize this in the STEM workforce. We don't

want the pendulum to swing too far away from higher education, but spending \$50,000 on a college degree may not be the best path for everyone. I now see the light – with all the manufacturing, we need balance. Graham Wood said that a degree is still important, but it should be intentional. We need to weigh the pros and cons for individual students. Dr. Tom said that this is fabulous stuff. Thank you, John.

Graham Wood said that this aligns nicely with an update he wants to give the Committee. The Department, in collaboration with Ohio Excels, is redesigning the industry-recognized credentials (IRC) system. We want to make sure that our evaluation of IRCs aligns with what their value is in the real working world. We're confident that this new system will be what's best for students. We understand that this is effectively affecting graduation requirements. But we are anticipating that and it's not going to happen on a short timeline (the new IRC list won't affect next year's seniors, for example).

OSLN UPDATES

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is working on a partnership playbook. This builds on the theme for today, the need for more support. This is new to OSLN's portfolio. We are learning from interaction with schools that there's need for additional supports around partnerships. We are going to spend the next few months doing some research, having conversations with schools and partners that already do this sort of work. We'll be recognizing work that's already been done and building on it. It's being designed for both schools and outside partners. The "why" is set; we need to help with the "how." It will be practitioner-oriented.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman said, "This feels like something you can coordinate with the Ohio Manufacturers' Association and JobsOhio to distribute widely. Are you planning that?" Sandra answered that we haven't looked into that but we are working with OMA on the OSLN design challenge. Lauren Massie said that OMA just created a Manufacturing Career Ambassador program (started in January). The pilot is in Central Ohio. It's a leverage tool for work-based learning opportunities. Businesses want to be engaged, but they don't have a point of contact. We have to be able to measure success and what's impactful in career exploration and planning. We would love to partner with OSLN on that.

Sandra asked, "What is missing? We need to fill in the gaps." The partnership playbook will remain aligned with the quality model so that it never feels like "one more thing." We need assessments to figure out what already exists and what the gaps are. We have five years of STEM schools demonstrating excellence with partners. We're looking at national supports, not just Ohio. I can't wait to have a conversation with OMA.

Sandra talked to the Committee about the CTE+STEM Innovation Lab. Thought partners are really important. This is a new idea that is coming from the Departments' Offices of Graduate Success and Career-Technical Education. There are a lot of supports around CTE content, but we still need a sound [pedagogy]. We are hoping to pilot the first lab this summer and focus on instructional practices unique to STEM education all through the lens of the career fields in

Ohio. We will bring together around 50 educators. We will host in Central Ohio for our pilot year, but our ultimate goal is to see labs in all our regions. The announcement is coming out today.

Sandy Guinto spoke about the OSLN design challenge. Every year, OSLN goes to industry to develop a problem that students can come up with solutions to. This year we partnered with the Ohio Manufacturers' Association and Drive Ohio. Problem statement: How do we improve aspects of electric transportation to improve the movement of people and things? Develop a plan, system or product that addresses the future of electric vehicles, drones, and advanced air transportation systems in the state of Ohio. It's for students in K-12 and there are ten different areas of focus. The process starts in August. Students are scored and ranked based on videos in January. 60,000 students engaged in the design challenge this year, up from 45,000 last year. Invitations have been forwarded to all Committee members to the design showcase; Jeremy [Varner] will be one of our featured speakers.

Marysville STEM Early College High School Spotlight

Mr. Scott Bennet told the Committee that it is his second year as principal. Prior to this, he was the principal at a STEM-designated high school in Reynoldsburg. So often, old males come in and talk about what STEM looks like. We started our student advisory group this year and today we'll be hearing from them.

The students presented a slide deck of STEM opportunities at Marysville STEM Early College High School. We have five STEM pathways here – health, engineering, auto tech, information tech, and aviation (which is new this year).

The school currently offers college prep classes and is working on trade school prep classes. Students can take classes at Columbus State Community College and Ohio State University. Students shared, "We can take 27 college courses on our high school campus."

We use mastery grading instead of A-B-C-D-F. Students can remediate on their own if they don't do well on a test. We have HOSA, BPA, and SkillsUSA chapters as well as student-created clubs.

Dr. Sarah Redick asked students, "How did you get on the student advisory board? What do you advise?" Students answered that they are elected by peers (two for each class, three for sophomores). We discuss what's going on in the building and bring up issues. We discuss mental aspects of school – how can we get more resources out there? Also things like needing another water fountain. We help students feel comfortable about reaching out for support. We are working with someone at CSCC about this and will present findings and ideas at the end of the year.

Mr. Scott Bennet said to add to that, he "dumped a ton of data on students this year" (the results of a bunch of surveys last spring). The student advisory board sorted through that and created committees.

Lauren Massie asked the students, "As part of the healthcare pathway, do you have opportunities to go to hospital/clinicals?"

A student answered that they can volunteer at Memorial Hospital any semester, they just have to interview at hospital and get accepted.

Scott also said that the school partners with a nursing home and students do their CNA work there.

Jeremy Varner said that he wants to go back to the conversation about college vs. career. That's a false dichotomy. When we follow the ninth-grade cohort, six years later, 68% don't have a degree. We need to be sure they have an intentional plan for their careers. He wanted to share that perspective.

STEM Committee Meeting Schedule

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

Jenny Russell reminded Committee members that calendar year 2025 financial disclosure forms are due to the state by May 15.

Public Comments

No public comments

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. Dr. Tom added that this has been a bit of a pivotal meeting for us, discussing workforce development.

Adjournment

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

Dr. Tom Schwieterman adjourned the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

The next STEM Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, May 14, 2026 at the Department of Education and Workforce in Columbus.