

# Ohio STEM Committee Meeting Minutes

**MAY 12, 2025**

*9 A.M.-12 P.M.*

## **OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE**

*25 S. FRONT ST., COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215*

### **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**, Vice President of Public Policy, Columbus Partnership (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

### **OHIO STEM LEARNING NETWORK PRESENT**

**Kelly Gaier Evans**, Director

**Sandra Wilder, Ph.D.**, STEM Relationship Manager

**Sandy Guinto**, STEM Relationship Manager

**Matthew Williams**, STEM Relationship Manager

### **OTHERS PRESENT**

**Stephanie Matthews**, A Tribe for Jazz

**Allison Shardell**, Par Excellence STEM Academy

**Gisele James**, Par Excellence STEM Academy  
**Dr. Jeremy Ervin**, Community STE(A)M Academy  
**Megan Gebhart-Powell**, Community STE(A)M Academy  
**Lisa Cinadr**, St. Ambrose School  
**Dr. Daniel Roberts**, West High School  
**Oktay Ince**, Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School  
**Mary Schneider**, PAST Foundation  
**Allen Wilson**, Superintendent, iSTEM

## **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 9:04 a.m.

#### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Dr. Tom Schwieterman welcomed Committee members, Department of Education and Workforce and Ohio STEM Learning Network staff, and guests to the meeting. He noted that there is a packed agenda today. He introduced a couple new folks – Graham Wood, the Administrator of the Office of Graduate Success, and Jana Fornario, the ODHE chancellor designee on the Committee. Jana thanked everyone for welcoming her into the group. Graham said that he would be giving a bit of an introduction later in the meeting.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion made to approve the May 12, 2025 STEM Committee meeting agenda by Andy Aichele, seconded by Will Ashburn.

All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

#### **APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 3, 2025 MEETING MINUTES**

Motion made to approve the February 3, 2025 STEM Committee meeting minutes by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Will Ashburn.

All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

#### **PARTNER SPOTLIGHT**

Dr. Sarah Redick introduced Stephanie Matthews, the executive director of A Tribe for Jazz.

The mission of A Tribe for Jazz is “to preserve the legacy and advance the future of jazz through visual storytelling, live & virtual performances, education, and community engagement.”

Sarah told the Committee that as an advocate for interdisciplinary learning, Stephanie leverages jazz as a transformative tool for social-emotional learning, STEM integration, and emotional wellness. She created JazzLab, a mobile pilot program funded by the Battelle Central Ohio STEM Grant, which merges music, science, and technology through immersive, hands-on experiences. The program fosters 21st-century competencies and social-emotional skills while promoting career awareness among underserved youth.

Sarah said that Stephanie is also a champion for arts accessibility who has partnered with COSI, Columbus City Schools, the PAST Foundation, Columbus Recreation and Parks, and leading institutions of higher learning.

Stephanie Matthews told the Committee that JazzLab is already running ten Columbus City Schools after-school programs through the Columbus Department of Recreation and Parks' WOW program. WOW stands for "without walls" and provides programming at schools with no recreation centers within walking distance.

JazzLab runs for four weeks once a week after school (an hour to an hour and a half, depending on the school). There is a live jazz trio at every session, and the musicians also serve as educators. Students wear lab coats to help them "think like a scientist." The sessions cover sound science, math (wave forms and synthesizer sounds), virtual reality (COSI provides goggles for students to experience playing instruments on stage with a jazz quintet), and the design process (through instrument assembly; JazzLab worked with the PAST Foundation to create 3D-printed guitar kits). They share everyday, culturally relevant examples of the design process (what process do students use to design a hairstyle or tennis shoes, as examples). Stephanie said that Dr. Nathan Harris of See Brilliance is working with us on explaining the design process; students are going through the steps of the design process in their lives already but we're working to give them the language of the design process. JazzLab works with historically underserved kids.

A Tribe for Jazz received a City of Columbus Summer Programming Grant to expand JazzLab's Summer Experience at Fort Hayes this year. They are offering it free to students ages 7-17 (kids in other organizations – like scouts, summer camps, etc. – take a field trip to participate for the day); ten confirmed community partners this summer.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman asked Stephanie Matthews how she got started in this. Stephanie answered that STEM was a logical way to frame JazzLab. Sound is physics, music is math; pretty much based on what she would have loved to have done when she was an eighth grader. WOSU Broad & High aired a segment about JazzLab last Thursday. Stephanie wants to connect with middle school CTE (and so is excited to be at Fort Hayes).

Jeff Polesovsky said that he would like to meet with Stephanie about business partners, etc. He asked if she is following what kids are doing now and if she is seeing trends in opportunities. Stephanie answered not yet because it's a pilot program. We are still testing to see if it actually works! But we want to get to the place where we are tracking. JazzLab hasn't focused on academic success; we want to be an access point to get kids to try new things. We

didn't go into making music and STEM professionals, just an introduction to career pathways and making connections.

Andy Aichele remarked that it's been a delight to partner with Stephanie. JazzLab seems like it's an experience where it's safe for kids to learn, and kids learn to collaborate and trust each other.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman said he loves to see the right and left brain fully immersed with each other. "I love the lab coats, I love the live music. It's just an immersive experience."

Stephanie shared that JazzLab is hoping to move throughout the state, and they're thinking about doing a pop-up experience in Newark, but it's a heavy lift and it might be better to settle in one place for a while.

Graham Wood asked about the experience within school buildings – since JazzLab is operating in the after-school space, do you have conversation with teachers beforehand? Stephanie replied that they come in through the Columbus Department of Recreation and Parks since that group already has relationships with the schools, so we didn't have much contact with school leaders – but we always try to meet the music teachers.

## Discussion Items

### POLICY AND COMPLIANCE UPDATES

#### *NEW PROCESS FOR INITIAL DESIGNATION*

- Dr. Sandra Wilder shared a quick review of the process. Right now when a school applies for initial designation, two things happen. If the school doesn't meet the benchmark for us to make a site visit, we meet with them to give detailed feedback, make connections, and offer them space in OSLN programs. If they do meet the benchmarks, they get a site visit. If we do a site visit and they are not recommended for designation, they start from the very beginning if they want to apply again, and there's no acknowledgement of the work and progress they've already made.
- When it comes time for designated schools to be redesignated, and they are not yet recommended, they don't have to go through the whole application again, just work on the specific attributes we have noted – and we see growth throughout their growth plan period.
- Starting this year with schools seeking initial designation who went through the application process and site visit, if they are not yet recommended for designation by the Committee, we will offer them an informal growth plan – so they can reapply the following year for just the attributes they haven't met.
- As part of the initial designation growth plan, the school commits to reapplying the following year, creating SMART goals for each attribute not met and sharing them with OSLN and DEW for approval within 30 days of the formal recommendation voted on at

the STEM Committee meeting, and a touch-base meeting (equivalent to an Intent to Apply meeting) with DEW and OSLN in November or December.

- Even if the school has met the requirements of attributes 1.4 [Governing Body, STEM/STEAM Advisory Group and Curriculum Team] and 3.2 [Partnerships Extend Learning Opportunities], they will still need to resubmit evidence for those two attributes to show that their practice has continued over the past year.
- Sandra said that schools have shared frustrations that all the work that's been put in, all the evidence that's been shared counts for nothing, and they have to go back to very beginning.
- Dr. Tom Schwieterman said, "I assume an informal growth plan comes with a site visit?" Sandra replied yes. Dr. Tom asked if the Committee has any concerns about the selective reapplication process. No one did. Dr. Tom said that that STEM Committee has always been pro-growth and pro-progress; STEM designation is not an exclusive club – school districts can achieve it with our help.
- Kelly Gaier Evans added that the new process recognizes growth and progress.
- Dr. Tom Schwieterman let them Committee know that we have schools today in this process.

#### *NEW REQUIREMENT FOR STEM TO STEAM ADDENDUM*

- Dr. Sarah Redick spoke about adding the requirement of arts artifact submission when a school would like to modify their designation from STEM to STEAM
- The previous requirement was just a written description, but we found that this didn't supply sufficient evidence of practices. For new requirements we are proposing two lesson plans from two different grade levels that include content standards. These lesson plans need to show integration of arts and design into science, technology, engineering, or mathematics disciplines.
- Jana Fornario said, "I think the STEAM application requires a[n arts] partner – is that included in the written description?" Sarah answered that it is.
- Dr. Tom Schwieterman added that he thinks this is just correcting an omission, and Sarah agreed.
- Motion to approve requiring arts artifacts for schools seeking a STEM to STEAM addendum made by Jeff Polesvsky, second by Andy Aichele. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

#### *GROWTH PLAN PROCESS*

- Dr. Sarah Redick reviewed the growth plan process (five steps).
  1. STEM Committee votes to put school on growth plan ("corrective action plan" in statute).
  2. Within three months of vote, DEW and OSLN meet with school to create growth plan.
  3. Progress monitoring throughout the year through quarterly meetings with school, OSLN, and DEW.
  4. School submits application by uploading artifacts to SlideRoom for attributes identified in growth plan. Site visits scheduled as needed.

5. STEM Committee votes to revoke school's designation or approve additional five years of designation.
  - The second application is only for attributes identified in the growth plan.

#### *STATUS OF SCHOOLS CURRENTLY ON GROWTH PLANS*

- Dr. Sarah Redick told the Committee that there are currently nine schools on growth plans (corrective action plans).
  1. There were site visits to four schools this spring. One school opted out of the growth plan process.
  2. There will be site visits to four schools in the fall.
  3. There are four schools newly entering the growth plan process as of today's meeting.

#### *WEST HIGH SCHOOL*

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that West High School be removed from their corrective action plan and approved for an additional five years of STEM designation. Their plan was finalized a year ago; they had nine attributes to work on. They have been designated since 2008. Sandra said that she would be remiss if she didn't mention that to see a public urban high school with lots of students come together as one community and really embody the spirit of STEM was absolutely amazing.

Motion to remove West High School from their corrective action plan and approve them for an additional five years of STEM designation made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Will Ashburn. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

Dr. Daniel Roberts, the principal of West High School, addressed the Committee. He said that Dr. Redick and Dr. Wilder have given really great feedback. The growth plan was for teachers, but failure was administrators. Feedback and support was imperative. We learned more about community partners – not just for professional development but also augmenting work that already exists to take things to the next level. West has a high English language learner population and high IEP population. Their superintendent, Dr. Chapman, is doing a redesign of all high schools (there are twenty) – and they are moving to academies. The requirement to have a schoolwide PBL project seemed really hard to do, but it wasn't, really. The whole building and all students have done that as part of growth plan. Thank you all again.

Jeff Polesovsky asked about the work West's students are doing around rapid bus transit (school located on West Broad corridor) – he'd like to talk to Dr. Roberts more about that. He said that maybe the Columbus Partnership can work with kids around this. Dr. Roberts replied that this was not just what the school wanted to do – the kids really bought into it. Dr. Sandra Wilder added that it was a schoolwide PBL, and everyone was tied into COTA[, the Central Ohio Transit Authority].

#### *MATER DEI ACADEMY*

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Mater Dei Academy be removed from their corrective action plan and approved for an additional five years of STEM

school equivalent designation. Mater Dei is a private Catholic school in northeast Ohio. They had eight attributes in their growth plan. Because culture is foundational and has to come before strategy, the very first thing this school did is revisit their mission and vision and align faith-based values with STEM cultural practices. Once they did that, every other area of growth followed. People have to come first and strategies will follow. There are twelve total attributes on the rubric, and when we first started with growth plans, the STEM Committee wondered if this [progressing on so many attributes within one year] was achievable. Sandra said that it is – every school that has gone through the growth plan process is meeting their goals.

Motion to remove Mater Dei Academy from their corrective action plan and approve them for an additional five years of STEM school equivalent designation made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Jeremy Varner. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

#### *SPRINGMILL STEM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL*

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Springmill STEM Elementary School be removed from their corrective action plan and approved for an additional five years of STEM designation. Springmill is a public school in Mansfield. They had only three attributes (mostly integration of disciplines) in their growth plan. They were really able to focus on a few attributes. They did have PBL, inquiry-based learning, and schoolwide design challenges. We always recommend that schools take a full year to work through their growth plans even though some schools are eager to exit.

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

#### *LINDEN MCKINLEY STEM ACADEMY*

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that Linden McKinley was originally designated in 2015; OSLN has no recommendation for them. They were recommended for a growth plan in February 2024. They started the growth plan process, wrote a growth plan, and then unfortunately, they experienced shifting priorities in the district and had to change to other resources. They did have twelve attributes to work on, so this was a heavy lift.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman requested that the meeting minutes reflect that this is a voluntary revoking on their own. Jeff Polesovsky asked, “about revoke...words matter. Can we reflect that this was voluntary?” Jenny Russell replied that statute says the Committee has to revoke the school’s designation. Jeremy Varner added that if the Committee sees stuff, we can ask about making language changes around it. Maybe “withdrawing” from the process? We can work on taking this to the legislature. The language is very proscriptive all throughout this section of statute.

Motion made to revoke Linden McKinley’s STEM designation due to not completing their corrective action plan made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Andy Aichele. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

## *ISTEM*

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that iSTEM be removed from their corrective action plan and approved for an additional five years of STEM designation. She said that iSTEM had four attributes in their growth plan. They have an extensive partnership network and had to leverage that network. The school took the last year to really think about how to do this, to make instruction relevant and authentic. Dr. Sarah Redick shared the best part of the site visit. She said that a teacher told them, “Over the course of this past year, I have been inspired to be a teacher again. I haven’t felt that in a while. This is what STEM is all about.” Working through the growth plan touched this teacher so deeply that she felt it corrected her course in her professional career. Sandra added that they sensed a shift of culture on their site visit last week.

Motion made to remove iSTEM from their corrective action plan and approve them for an additional five years of STEM designation made by Jeff Polesovsky, seconded by Jeremy Varner. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

Allen Wilson, iSTEM superintendent, addressed the Committee. He wanted to publicly thank Dr. Sandra Wilder and Dr. Sarah Redick for their assistance throughout the process; it was a growth experience for their school. He just came in last summer and found the school stale, maybe with no purpose. This has been a reset for iSTEM and they’re heading in a direction that everyone is very excited about. He thanked the Committee for their support.

## **SCHOOLS UPDATES**

### *UPDATE ON SCHOOLS INITIALLY DESIGNATED IN 2018*

Dr. Sarah Redick gave a quality monitoring update. Two schools did not complete quality monitoring.

#### *BOULEVARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL*

Dr. Sarah Redick told the Committee that Boulevard Elementary School elected not to complete quality monitoring by not submitting a redesignation application (due December 2024).

Motion made to revoke Boulevard Elementary School’s STEM school designation due to declining quality monitoring, effective at the end of the 2024-2025 school year, made by Will Ashburn, seconded by Andy Aichele. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

#### *LANDER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL*

Dr. Sarah Redick told the Committee that Lander Elementary School elected not to complete quality monitoring by not submitting a redesignation application (due December 2024).

Motion made to revoke Lander Elementary School’s STEM school designation due to declining quality monitoring, effective at the end of the 2024-2025 school year, made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Jeremy Varner. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

Dr. Sarah Redick let the Committee know that we did reach out to both schools several times to make them aware of the consequences of not applying for redesignation. We are having them fill out assurances that they understand and have communicated their designation status to their communities.

## **STEM AND STEAM SCHOOL DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2018 SCHOOLS**

### *ORCHARD STEM SCHOOL*

Sandy Guinto told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Orchard STEM School be placed on a corrective action plan. Orchard STEM School is a public K-8 school in Northeast Ohio. Their initial designation is STEM, and they are now seeking STEAM designation. Sandy was the site visit coordinator. The principal, Dr. Moss, is an amazing educator with great vision. Students have voice and choice. The school does an amazing job of integrating technology. Every student (K-8) takes a computer science class. They have intentional integration of all subject matters, but this is an area of growth.

Andy Aichele asked if Sandy feels this is an extraordinary lift. Sandy said she does not. The school does a lot of the work, but it's not always intentional and not always tied to a standard. Right now it's more organic, and comes up naturally as it happens. She said that she knows it looks like a lot, but in actuality, it's not. They have the drive and the will and they're ready to move forward with it.

Motion to place Orchard STEM School on a corrective action plan made by Dr. Tom Scwieterman, seconded by Jeff Polesovsky. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *ST. JOSEPH PARISH SCHOOL*

Sandy Guinto told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that St. Joseph Parish School be approved for five additional years of STEM school equivalent designation. St. Joseph is a private K-8 school in Northwest Ohio. The school looks at classes as “academic outcomes,” not just classes. Leaders and teachers do what will benefit students academically – students go where they need to be for their learning, which is very unique. They are using design thinking all over the building. The school does a model job of personalized learning and is very student-led. When a student was interested in the *Titanic*, teachers ran with it. They use the acronym WIN – “what I need” (what students need in their learning). They do Flex Friday, a day to catch up on everything that can't happen during the regular school week, and kids pick teachers they want to work with about something they're interested in or something they need help with.

Motion to approve St. Joseph Parish School for five additional years of STEM school equivalent designation made by Dr. Tom Scwieterman, seconded by Will Ashburn. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *STEAMM ACADEMY @ HARTFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL*

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that STEAMM Academy @ Hartford Middle School be placed on a corrective action plan. STEAMM Academy is a public school, serving grades 4-8. They have lots of areas for growth, but Sandra doesn't think this will be a big lift. The rubric ratings don't capture the nuance of where the staff truly is. (They have just three attributes to work on.) The school has strong leadership, invested staff, and support from their district...their school leader reacted to the recommendation for a growth plan and said this is how STEM is, it's continuous improvement. Sandra doesn't have concerns; they are dedicated.

Motion to place STEAMM Academy @ Hartford Middle School on a corrective action plan made by Will Ashburn, seconded by Dr. Tom Schwieterman. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *ST. AMBROSE SCHOOL*

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that St. Ambrose School be approved for five additional years of STEAM school equivalent designation. Their school leader, principal Lisa Cinadr, is here today. There are many things that St. Ambrose does wonderfully. One moment that Sandra absolutely loved from the site visit was when we were sitting with the staff and realized they're more than just staff; when they come together, they're a family. They work together and they all know that everyone needs to collaborate.

Lisa Cinadr, the principal of St. Ambrose School, addressed the Committee. She said that she is so proud to serve as head of school/principal. We are so thrilled. We're the little engine that could – and does. We are so grateful for DEW and OSLN. You challenged us and cheered us on, and our students deserve that.

Motion to approve St. Ambrose 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.

## **SCHOOLS INITIALLY DESIGNATED IN 2019 ENTERING QUALITY MONITORING**

The Committee needs to vote on each school individually to approve an additional five years of designation pending quality monitoring during the 2025-2026 school year. The application opens in June, and site visits will be completed by April 2026.

### *ASHLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL*

Motion to approve Ashland Christian School for five additional years of STEAM school equivalent designation pending quality monitoring during the 2025-2026 school year made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Jeff Polesovsky. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *BATH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL*

Motion to approve Bath Elementary School for five additional years of STEM school designation pending quality monitoring during the 2025-2026 school year made by Will Ashburn, seconded by Jeremy Varner. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *ST. PAUL SCHOOL*

Motion to approve St. Paul School in Salem for five additional years of STEM school equivalent designation pending quality monitoring during the 2025-2026 school year made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Jeff Polesovsky. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *MCKINLEY STEMM ACADEMY*

Motion to approve McKinley STEMM Academy in Toledo for five additional years of STEM school designation pending quality monitoring during the 2025-2026 school year made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Andy Aichele. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *MCKINLEY STEM ACADEMY*

Motion to approve McKinley STEM Academy in Steubenville for five additional years of STEM school designation pending quality monitoring during the 2025-2026 school year made by Jeremy Varner, seconded by Will Ashburn. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *SHENANDOAH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL*

Motion to approve Shenandoah Elementary School for five additional years of STEM school designation pending quality monitoring during the 2025-2026 school year made by Will Ashburn, seconded by Dr. Tom Schwieterman. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *SHENANDOAH HIGH SCHOOL*

Motion to approve Shenandoah High School for five additional years of STEM school designation pending quality monitoring during the 2025-2026 school year made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Dr. Tom Schwieterman. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *KINDER GARDEN SCHOOL*

Motion to approve Kinder Garden School for five additional years of STEM school equivalent designation pending quality monitoring during the 2025-2026 school year made by Jeremy Varner, seconded by Jeff Polesovsky. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

## SCHOOLS SEEKING TO MODIFY THEIR DESIGNATION

### *HORIZON SCIENCE ACADEMY COLUMBUS HIGH SCHOOL*

Dr. Sandra Wilder shared information about the addendum submitted by Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School. They're a community school serving grades 9-12 in Central Ohio and are seeking to have their designation changed from STEM school equivalent to STEAM school equivalent. OSLN's formal recommendation is only two pages because this is just an addendum - they will move out of the compliance application and be part of quality monitoring next school year (they're not to that cycle yet). Arts are such a big part of the school's work.

Sandra said, "They're undergoing quality monitoring in less than a year. Why is this so important now? The community itself wants it, not the principal necessarily." The attitude is, we're ready, why wait? It will boost us to do more next school year and will also be good for our greater charter school network across the Midwest. (They will be the first STEAM school in their network.)

Dr. Tom Schwieterman asked, "Has this ever happened before?" Sandra said, "Not right before redesignation. I love that this serves as their north star."

Sandra told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School's addendum be approved and modify the school's designation from STEM to STEAM.

Motion to approve the addendum of Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School and modify its designation from STEM school equivalent to STEAM school equivalent made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Will Ashburn. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *GLOBAL IMPACT STEM ACADEMY*

Dr. Sandra Wilder talked to the Committee about the addendum submitted by Global Impact STEM Academy, a 7-12 independent STEM school in Springfield. They were redesignated in 2022. They are expanding and seeking to add sixth grade. They're a model STEM school when it comes to their culture, teaching and learning, and leveraging partnerships. They made a commitment to scale their practices down to sixth grade.

Sandra told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Global Impact STEM Academy's addendum to add sixth grade be approved.

Motion to approve the addendum of Global Impact STEM Academy to modify the scope of the current designation to include sixth grade made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Andy Aichele. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *TRI-STATE STEM+M SCHOOL*

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee about the addendum submitted by Tri-State STEM+M School. They are an independent STEM school in Southeast Ohio and were redesignated last year (2024). They went from STEM to STEAM designation, and they are expanding as well. They currently teach students in grades 9-12 and are seeking to add grades 6-8. Sandra has no doubt that they will be to successfully apply their practices to younger students. Tri-State STEM is a model STEM school that has great practices. It will not be a lift at all to do same things as in high school for lower grades. Jeff Polesovsky asked when they started, and Sandra answered that they were initially designated in 2015. They were not part of OSLN's school visits for teachers.

Sandra told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Tri-State STEM+M School's addendum to add grades 6-8 be approved.

Motion to approve the addendum of Tri-State STEM+M School to add grades 6-8 made by Jeremy Varner, seconded by Andy Aichele. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

## **STEM AND STEAM SCHOOL DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS SEEKING INTIAL DESIGNATION**

### *CRESTVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL*

Sandy Guinto shared information about Crestview Elementary School, a public school in Eastern Ohio. Dr. Sandra Wilder said that as the Committee probably remembers, she and Dr. Sarah Redick meet with each school seeking initial designation because we know how powerful targeted feedback can be. We don't discourage schools from applying. Sandy Guinto said that this is the first cohort of schools applying for initial designation that will be placed on informal growth plans. Crestview hasn't met seven attributes. They will be creating SMART goals on these attributes only, and will receive support from regional hubs, Dr. Sandra Wilder, and Dr. Sarah Redick. The school is excited – it's a milestone now, they don't have to go down the entire path again. Sandy believes that with supports we'll be back here next year, voting to approve.

Sandy told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Crestview Elementary School not yet be approved for designation, but instead be put on a growth plan.

Motion to not yet approve Crestview Elementary School and place them on a growth plan made by Will Ashurn, seconded by Andy Aichele. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *INDIAN HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL*

Dr. Sandra Wilder shared information about Indian Hill Middle School, a public school in Southwest Ohio. All the other schools in this district are STEM-designated (high school and elementary school). They need to work on five attributes. They earned establishing even in

the attributes they have already met, so they are not starting at the beginning. They will follow the same timeline as next year's initial designation cohort.

Sandra told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Indian Hill Middle School not yet be approved for designation, but instead be put on a growth plan.

Motion to not yet approve Indian Hill Middle School and place them on a growth plan made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Jeremy Varner. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

### *ST. BENEDICT SCHOOL*

Dr. Sandra Wilder shared information about St. Benedict School, a private K-8 Catholic school in Northeast Ohio. The school has been engaged with OSLN for a few years now, so we had a pretty good idea of where they would land. They excel in many areas of the rubric – they have only three attributes to go.

Sandra told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that St. Benedict School not yet be approved for designation, but instead be put on a growth plan.

Motion to not yet approve St. Benedict School and place them on a growth plan made by Andy Aichele, seconded by Dr. Tom Schwieterman. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

Sandra told the Committee that being able to talk to a school through the lens of “not yet” (instead of “no”) has been a game-changer. Dr. Tom agreed that this process is a lot better than approving schools “with conditions.”

### *PAR EXCELLENCE STEM ACADEMY*

Dr. Sandra Wilder shared information about Par Excellence STEM Academy. They are a K-6 community school in Central Ohio. Our rubric says that STEM needs to be for all, and our schools do a very good job of that. Par Excellence takes that to a whole new level. Their STEM practices started in special education classes and scaled up to schoolwide. This is not the only attribute they met, but this one really resonated with Sandra. They deliver robust, high quality STEM education for all.

Allison Shardell, the Director of Student Services and STEM at Par Excellence, addressed the Committee. She thanked Dr. Sandra Wilder and Dr. Sarah Redick and said they've been a huge support over the last couple of years. Our special education students are thriving in STEM. Of our students, 35% have disabilities, 10-15% are homeless, and all are in poverty. These students tend to be left out of these kinds of things.

Sandra told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that Par Excellence STEM Academy be approved for five years of STEM school equivalent designation.

Motion to approve Par Excellence STEM Academy for five years of STEM school equivalent designation made by Will Ashburn, seconded by Jeff Polesovsky. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

## **RECOMMENDATION TO REMOVE CONDITIONS AND FULLY DESIGNATE COMMUNITY STE(A)M ACADEMY**

Dr. Sandra Wilder told the Committee that Community STE(A)M Academy is “our independent STEM school that was designated ‘with conditions’ in 2022.” We visited a couple of times and Sandra struggled with the recommendation; it’s hard to capture what things look like at CSA. Truly, they live their name – they are a community-based, student-centered, community problem-driven school. They simulate what students will experience in the STEM workforce (through integrated disciplines). CSA kind of takes it up to a whole ‘nother level. Students’ entire experience is integrated – it’s student-driven learning. At one point during a site visit Sandra asked a teacher how they plan to integrate without it being contrived. The teacher told her there was no point in fleshing it out, because the students will take it in whatever direction they want to take it.

Dr. Jeremy Ervin, founder and chief administrative officer of Community STE(A)M Academy, addressed the Committee with Megan Gebhart-Powell, the associate director. Jeremy said that truly CSA is all about community; we are community-focused in every way – heart, mind, body, and soul. It’s nice to be an independent school where we can hire and have on our board people who are directly aligned with the quality model. We bring in lots of partners because they’re part of our community. We are student-led, and students can do things completely on their own because they’re interested. Community STE(A)M draws in marginalized groups that have not always been interested in STEM. We appreciate the team coming to see us and give us feedback and have fun with our students. We appreciate the support of OSLN. We have integration of industrial credentials through and through. We don’t have to be set in stone – we don’t have bells, we don’t have classes (we have courses). There’s freedom and flexibility for students to learn in a real environment. Dr. Sandra Wilder added that between learning neighborhoods and flexible scheduling, the school is anchored in standards.

Sandra told the Committee that OSLN is recommending that the conditions under which Community STE(A)M Academy was originally designated be removed, and the school be approved for five years of full STEAM school designation.

Motion to remove the conditions under which Community STE(A)M was originally designated and approve the school for five years of full STEAM school designation made by Dr. Tom Schwieterman, seconded by Andy Aichele. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

## **Partnership Updates**

### **STEM COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES**

#### *ANDY AICHELE*

- Thank you everyone for your participation in our extremely wet COSI Science Festival last week. We are planning for year number eight next year already!

### *DR. TOM SCHWIETERMAN*

- I met with Graham Wood about making STEM designation more accessible, but also more so with STEM education. The Committee should be working on STEM dissemination and growth enablement as much as we do on designation, especially in rural areas.
- Andy Aichele added that he's hoping that some of the efficiencies Dr. Tom has made increases the bandwidth, which we've been talking about for three years.

### *JEFF POLESOVSKY*

- Dr. Tom asked about what deals we are landing here in Central Ohio. These conversations are so important to tell the stories to our kids earlier and earlier about emerging technologies that didn't exist a few years ago. Investments are happening in surrounding Central Ohio counties; we love to tell the stories that kids will have the chance to learn early and engage with the workforce early.
- The Center of Advanced Technology at Columbus State Community College is involved in all these investments. Big biotech happens in this region. Our workforce pool needs to be getting bigger and deeper so everyone isn't fighting over the same small pool. We need to make sure companies know we have enough people to go through the work. We want to keep teenagers here.
- Dr. Tom told Jeff that these are world-class opportunities (AmGen, Intel, Anduril, etc.) you're talking about here. Exposure to kids early on through a lot of these programs is probably priority number one for making these investments work.
- Dr. Tom then asked, "How big of a deal is this?" Jeremy Varner replied that everyone is talking about workforce, workforce, workforce. CEP [career exploration and planning] is coming up – kids may not know about what's out there. They need the right skill sets to make good decisions. STEM and career infusion is in that domain. We are working on that in the [state biennial] budget. Jeff told the Committee that business communities around the state are talking with the legislature today. Dr. Tom said that maybe we could have CEP as a partner spotlight or something like that. He thinks it would be a great spotlight.

## **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE UPDATES**

### *STEM TEAM*

Dr. Tom Schwieterman introduced Graham Wood, the new administrator of STEM at the Department. Graham said, I lead the Office of Graduate Success here at DEW. The STEM team came over to our office about three months ago when Mary Ellen Dobransky stepped away from the agency. I want to thank everyone in the STEM community for such a warm welcome. I'd like to give a moment of appreciation to these two spectacular women – they keep STEM in Ohio moving. You know the work Dr. Sarah Redick does, but Jenny Russell really does a lot to keep everything together. These two are the force for STEM in this state. I want to give a major thank you to OSLN for all their help. You are doing the work to make the best for kids possible. I'm pumped for the future. Connections to the Office of Graduate Success make a lot of sense. We do a ton of work for the workforce side of the agency – K-12 and what comes next. A

diploma is not the goal; it's a stepping stone along the way. We are making efforts to prepare kids for that transition. Our office deals with graduation requirements, school counselors, business advisory councils, career exploration and planning, and college in high school. This is such an exciting transition.

### *OHIO BUDGET UPDATES*

Graham Wood shared with the Committee that about fourteen to fifteen years ago, the governor put a stake in the ground for every student in Ohio to have a career plan. That means a million different things and a ton of work; a career plan can't be a box checked. We have to get in gear around career awareness in elementary school and career exploration in middle school. A career plan is basically the scientific method – it's a hypothesis and you have to create opportunities for students to test that hypothesis. What kids don't want to do is important, too. We need to treat the high school experience more like a sand box. Our office is making a big effort regardless of what comes through in the budget. (There's money for this in the governor's version [but not in House version]. Thank you to our team and to all of you who are doing this in schools every day.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman said that this is an opportunity for this Committee to do things differently – how we do STEM and how we can do STEM differently and look at ways to make it more accessible (beyond designation). There are some schools who just can't do this; they have too few resources.

### **OHIO STEM LEARNING NETWORK UPDATES**

Kelly Gaier Evans thanked Dr. Sandra Wilder and Dr. Sarah Redick for all their work on designation this year.

### *OHIO STEM INNOVATION SUMMIT*

Kelly Gaier Evans told the Committee that the Ohio STEM Innovation Summit is coming up very quickly. It's June 3 – less than a month away. All Committee members should have an invite; we'd love to have you register and attend. This year's theme is "inspiring a curious community."

### *WHY ARE STEM SCHOOL MODELS USEFUL?*

Kelly posed this question to the Committee.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman said that they clearly show a path for schools to achieve something that seems overwhelming and a lot of work.

Andy Aichele said that a purpose-driven model can really show schools how they've got the stuff, but they may need a blueprint to get there.

Graham Wood said that we have incredible policy to do innovative things in this state. It's good to point to model schools so other schools can see how it's done.

Kelly said that they are a way to see, "Here's how we do STEM." They show that STEM is possible and show what it looks like across different contexts (small schools, large urban

schools, private schools, etc.) When we think about those schools, we know that all schools go through a change curve when they start with STEM education or the design process. In OSLN's Spring Into STEM program we include visits to designated schools – when teachers see something, that's the starting point of change. We have two more visits to go this year (this week). We did school visits in 2018-2019, but it's taken some time to get back to this post-Covid and redesignation. On school visits, it's not just teachers, but administrators, 18% of participants are business and community partners and 2% from higher ed. This is a huge opportunity to leverage model STEM (designated) schools to inspire others and show them how to get started. The participating teachers are pretty evenly split between the status of beginning, exploring and champion (but exploring is the biggest percentage). OSLN is excited to do this again in the fall. We would like to partner around especially high-need workforce areas of the state next year.

Many were skeptical going in; we didn't know if we'd get participation and buy-in, but we were pleasantly surprised on the back end. Some teachers were amazed and shocked at what we're doing and now they're part of a network to do the same things.

#### *STEM COMMITTEE/OSLN THOUGHT PARTNERSHIP*

Kelly Gaier Evans said that OSLN could use the Committee's thought partnership on how to think about next year's Ohio STEM Innovation Summit. Make it a two-day event? Identify sponsors that have shared ownership in growing our Ohio STEM workforce pipeline. Brainstorm approaches that would create mutual value for potential sponsors while advancing our STEM mission. How are we connecting the work the state is doing to the 500+ engaged educators at the summit?

Discussion and guiding questions for the Committee:

- Based on your experience in your respective sectors (higher ed, K-12, workforce, industry), what would meaningful engagement look like for a sponsor beyond just financial support?
- What specific workforce challenges do we know employers are facing that our summit could help address, making sponsorship attractive to them?
- How might we structure sponsorship opportunities to create shared ownership of the summit and its outcomes?
- Which organizations in our network might see value in this partnership approach versus traditional vendor relationships?

Dr. Tom Schwieterman said the summit is a fabulous conference but we have the opportunity to leverage STEM experience to education with workforce and higher ed; it's not just a teacher conference. We have the opportunity to add a workforce mentality to it.

Andy Aichele said that he understands the balance of STEM and STEAM is difficult. In integrating the arts – STEAM not STEM – will we attract a different group? Also engaging with out of school time groups like libraries. Do these teachers feel like we're all part of developing the workforce together?

Dr. Tom told the Committee that he senses a theme. Clearly the ultimate goal of this Committee is to get the workforce area to eventually enable STEM; this goes with the governor's mandate to focus on career plans.

Graham Wood asked, "How much have we had industry partners there to share? Like big, exciting businesses coming to the state?" (Companies saying here's what we do, connections to the classroom.) Jeff Polesovsky said that we have to formalize some kind of JobsOhio partnership that ties into the system. We have great data that shows where regions are trending, updating the dashboard on workforce needs every day. Kelly Gaier Evans said that OSLN has started initial conversation with JobsOhio, getting data.

Andy Aichele asked the education partners in the room what would drive them to participate in the summit.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman said that maybe the second day of the summit would be like an industry fair – careful not to become a job fair, though.

Kelly Gaier Evans asked, What pulls industry in? What can we provide at the summit to encourage businesses who are so busy to jump in and participate?

Dr. Tom said that for Midmark, this is a number one priority, getting involved in workforce development. The workforce is created in actual STEM education in schools (we are playing longball and are looking ten or fifteen years out).

Graham said that it's important to be really, really clear about what the experience and participation would be for businesses – like here's the investment you're making and here are the possible outcomes, really clearly articulating what they as a business can get out of this today.

Jeff Polesovsky asked, "So we have all the designated schools who are partnering with industry in one place at the summit?"

Kelly said OSLN has the information on these schools, but not all together; they're working on it and that's a yearly goal. Seven JobsOhio regions can see which of their businesses are working with kids in STEM; once people start to see that other companies are involved, they will want to get involved too. It creates some competition between companies – X business is doing something fun with kids and we want access to that, too.

Jeremy Varner suggested that we should have educators and industry talk about what they're doing together (in breakout sessions).

Gisele James, superintendent of Par Excellence STEM Academy, told the Committee that her students are trendy. Every company has research and development. Tech trending is very important. Students know how they are doing tech today. Companies can learn something from kids about where it's going, so they know what kids are looking forward to and being right there with future workers and young minds that will be using it.

Sandy Guinto warned the Committee that she was going to go on a bit of a tangent. She said that OSLN controls the summit, but we don't know the [other] conferences that are helpful. Would it be helpful to take some of our model STEM schools and present at industry conferences to let businesses know there is this network and that this is going on? Jeff said

that he thinks we have to get an initial thing going on this. We can start here in the Central Ohio region and work with JobsOhio to find out what everyone's plans are, then get the right "cohort" into showcasing in a public manner (at summits, workshops, meetings, etc.).

Dr. Tom told the Committee that this highlights again that this committee's opportunities lie in workforce.

Kelly thanked everyone for their thought partnership.

### *EXCELLENCE AWARDS*

Kelly Gaier Evans said the awards dinner is June 2. This is a chance to thank and celebrate our designated schools; STEM Excellence awards will also be presented.

## **STEM Committee Meeting Schedule**

Dr. Sarah Redick spoke about the upcoming 2025-2026 STEM Committee meeting schedule. The summer meeting will be held on Monday, July 14, at a location yet to be determined. The fall meeting will be held on Thursday, November 13, at a location yet to be determined. 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 that their ethics disclosure forms are due to the Ethics Commission on May 15.

## **Public Comments**

None

## **Closing**

In closing, Dr. Tom Schwieterman thanked the schools for coming in, because that adds context and color to the voting. He loved the jazz presentation and commended the schools for their innovation in considering alternative approaches to teaching.

## **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the STEM Committee meeting made by Will Ashburn, seconded by Jeff Polesovsky. All votes aye; none opposed. Motion approved.

Dr. Tom Schwieterman adjourned the meeting at 11:36 a.m.

The next STEM Committee meeting will be held on Monday, July 14 at a location yet to be determined.

*[N.B. The July 14, 2025 STEM Committee meeting was cancelled due to a lack of pressing matters to come before the Committee.]*