

STEM School  
Board of Directors Meeting  
May 4, 2021  
5:30pm – 7:00pm

**MINUTES**

**I. Call to Order 5:32**

**i Roll Call: Nicole Bostel**

BOD Members in attendance: Rudy Lukez, Nicole Smith, Roy Martinez, Ramesh Thatavarthi, Carla Gustafson, Kelly Reyna and Nate Angell

Additional Attendees: Penny Eucker, Robert Hoornstra, Nicole Bostel, Michelle Gasser

**ii Pledge of Allegiance: Kelly Reyna**

**iii. Reciting of the Mission Statement: Carla Gustafson**

**II. Review and approval of previous board meeting minutes:**

**Motion to approve: Nicole Smith**

**Motion to approve seconded: Roy Martinez**

**Minutes approved unanimously**

**III. Student leadership report:**

Due to AP testing, the student leadership could not attend this call and the report will be submitted in writing.

**IV. Architecture Bid Report: Robert Hoornstra, COO (slide show)**

As discussed in last month's board meeting, we are beginning the process to build a CHSAA gym and building addition to be completed in 2023.

- i.** Construction proposal requests were sent to specific firms and we also advertised in the Colorado Community Media Newspaper.
- ii.** Interviews were conducted by Robert Hoornstra, Carla Gustafson, and Kelly Reyna and they are ready to recommend a CMGC as the firm we should hire for this project.
- iii.** Timeline: Have the design completed by the end of the 2021. The major construction for the addition and partial gym will be completed in the summer of 2022. The connector to the two spaces will be finished in 2023.

**Motion to approve Robert Hoornstra to present his recommendation to the board to move forward with the construction contract:**

**Motion to approve: Carla Gustafson**

**Motion to approve seconded: Kelly Reyna**

**Motion approved unanimously**

**V. STEM Standards-Based Learning Initiative: Michelle Gasser**

We are in the beginning phases implementing Standards-Based Learning. Next year we will be learning all the aspects of standards-based learning to include grading, feedback, and instructional application.

**i. Benefits of SBL:**

This teaching method will allow us to communicate each students learning and academic growth with significantly greater accuracy enabling us to give clear feedback to students based on those learning goals. Our teachers will be working together in groups and in their departments to create proficiency skills. These proficiency skills will then communicate to students and parents how a student is doing on that specific standard so that students will have a clearer path their education. This will provide consistency between all the classes since everybody will be receiving the proficiencies department-wide. The students' final scores will reflect the current level of understanding, thus shifting the focus onto student performance towards meeting those standards rather than an accumulation of points. SBL also enables us to report behavioral development separately from academics.

- ii. **Teacher training;**  
Our teachers are in phase 1 of our learning on SBL and this change will be prototyped in the 2021-22 school year. Our teachers will learn how to implement this during Professional Development blocks. All teachers are working on standard prioritization and vertical alignment with other grade levels to best prepare students to consistently and functionally build those proficiency skills and track growth over time. STEM is working with experts who successfully rolled out this process for Aurora Public Schools and Jeffco so we have the advantage of past experience. STEM is unique because we are a K-12 school so we are doing this in phases. We have a teacher subcommittee that meets Friday afternoons.
- iii. **Future updates:**  
Michelle Gasser will be periodically presenting to the BOD Meetings, SAC, PTO and parent nights to inform every one of the updates in phases and developments. We also will be posting developments to the STEM website.

**Board Questions:**

**Question:** How many DCSD schools have implemented this and will there be any hesitance for any new enrolling students who are coming from another DCSD school that does not have this learning structure?

**Answer:** Denver County and DCSD are individual basis, while Aurora and Jeffco did a district-wide rollout, where HS could use the A-F grading scale. We'll have more information on which schools opted to go SBL in the future.

**Question:** Will this add any extra workload to the teachers by doing this rollout next year?

**Answer:** We're not rolling out any new initiatives for next year. We will be taking the year to train teachers and design the SBL to suit us specifically, and those training times will be completed during Professional Development so that no teacher planning or class time will be disrupted. The goal is to rollout for the 2022-23 year.

**Question:** With the behavior being reported separately, is that essentially a grade for their standards and one for behavior?

**Answer:** Yes, similar to our Elementary report cards now with the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

**VI. Executive Director's Report: Penny Eucker, PhD (slide)**

- i. **Celebrations:**
  - a. STEM ranked 10 out of 497 Colorado high school schools
  - b. Connor Railsback has been awarded with the Daniel's Scholarship
  - c. STEM FBLA Students take top spots at the State Leadership Competition
  - d. 3 HS teams competed for the locked Martin CodeQuest competition taking 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> place fir the Advanced Division and 8<sup>th</sup> in Novice division
  - e. #STEMShares took place the first week of the month. See STEM Center for Strength to view the events and resources available
  - f. No school May 7<sup>th</sup>. Please join us in this day of reflection, gratitude, togetherness and giving.
  - g. 1<sup>st</sup> annual STEM Happiness hour was a great success!
- ii. **Updates:**
  - a. State testing is still ongoing
  - b. PD Training for SBL – April 16
  - c. Welcome to Christina Wu- Secondary Assistant Director
  - d. Teacher Task Force team met with Dr. Mary Lindimore for scheduling training and discussed teacher feedback. Another all-staff survey will be send out soon.
    - i. **Schedule proposal:**
      - CORE teachers: 2 planning periods
      - Up to 2 flex days per semester based on needs
      - Fewer meetings and office hours will be 1 day/week

- ii. RtI/MTSS (as needed)- Federal Law mandated
    - iii. Teacher Instructional Support Personnel will be available for each school level
  - e. IA's/Graders will be added to assist the English Department as a pilot program
  - f. Ms. Dougan and Ms. Webb will finalize the master schedule and track enrollments while communicating any changes with teachers.
  - g. Team will meet in Sept. to review changes and determine additional supports as well as further improvements for the 2022-23 schedule
  - h. Enrollment campaign will be developed over the summer to bring our numbers back up.
  - i. Teacher care Model- The committee is working with Christy Clay to meet objectives and action models
  - j. 7<sup>th</sup> grade- Annual Holocaust Unit: attended a webinar with Fanny Starr's daughter Helen.
  - k. Monthly Student Forum and Parent Forum were held this month.
  - l. STEM Stands for Staff group continues to work on improving school culture and addressing concerns so that all can thrive.
- iii. Myths and Truths:
- a. Dr. Eucker does not and cannot willfully fire people. Firings are recommended by leaders of departments which are then approved by the STEM Board and legal team after examining evidence.
  - b. Dr. Eucker is available to meet with anyone and her calendar is accessible by everyone. Additionally, she conducts weekly walkthroughs to stay in touch with the teachers.
  - c. Dr. Eucker has led from behind, but this might allow false narratives to take hold. She has decided to tell her own story and reclaim the narrative.
  - d. STEM Leadership Team is working hard to ensure that 2021-22 will be our best year yet. We want to move toward bringing more positivity and joy to our school for staff and students.
- iv. Support Our Extended Families in India
- Many of our staff and students have family in crisis in India. Please help by looking into the US Embassy approved charities for relief:
- a. Mission Oxygen
  - b. Hemkunt Foundation
  - c. The Pramanit Foundation
  - d. [Indiacovidresources.in](http://Indiacovidresources.in)

## **VII. Public comment 6:15 PM**

There was a document that was read or supported by several people due to the 3 minute time constraint. The letter was sent to the board after the meeting. Please see the letter sent to your email for reference as well the email titled "Teacher Voices". All recurring concerns will be listed in bullet form here.

- Teacher attrition
- STEM's Toxic fear-based work culture
- Teacher's excessive workloads
- Lack of teacher support
- STEM's Failure to replicate
- Low Parent trust
- Lack of confidence that Dr. Eucker takes the teacher turnover rate at STEM seriously
- Perception that Dr. Eucker doesn't care about the teachers or students and that she bullies people who disagree with her.
- Declining enrollment
- Lack of programs due to teacher turnover

- Worry from students that the college entrance recommendations will be written by staff who do not know them due to advanced teacher attrition.
- Students experiencing increased mental issues and distress
- Lack of communication/Communication blackout from the BOD and Admin
- Concern that Dr. Eucker wants to ignore May 7<sup>th</sup> and does not support recovery efforts
- Worry that Dr. Eucker lacks key interpersonal relationship building and political skills
- Request for new leadership/request that Dr. Eucker's contract not be renewed
- Suggestion that the Board utilize the Colorado League of Charter Schools' resources to search for new leadership and execute a successful transition.
- Concern over lasting damage to students due to lack of consistency in teachers
- No loyalty to parents from upper administration
- Some will withdraw their students due to teacher attrition and lack of trust that STEM admin will do what needs to be done to stop teacher turnover.

Community question:

When there will be a specific opportunity for students to communicate in this type of way again and where we can also submit concerns directly as students and make sure that they are seen as the student population?

Answer:

Many of the Board Members listen to the student panel where they were discussing issues at the school in an open session. We always welcome comments from anybody to our emails which are available on the school website. We cannot commit to responding to every comment but if you request a response in the email, I encourage you to do that. There are also parent, student, and staff surveys listed in the newsletter, that's a great way to provide that feedback.

#### **VIII. Board Elections- Rudy Lukez**

We are running a board election for an open parent seat. 4 candidates have applied for the position.

- i. Electronic voting will be open 8 AM May 10, 2021 from 8 AM – May 15, 2021 at 5 PM
  - a. Everyone who is a parent with a working email address will be getting an e-ballot.
  - b. It will be secret
  - c. The ballot will be from simplyvoting.com
  - d. Check the Spam Folder if you do not see it.
- ii. Rudy asks for a motion to move Ramesh Thatavarthi from the parent position to the non-parent position and Ramesh has indicated that he is willing to serve at least one more year.

**Motion to invite and accept Ramesh Thatavarthi as a new Class B member upon the completion of his Class A term:**

**Motion proposed: Roy Martinez**

**Motion seconded: Nicole Smith**

**Motion passed unanimously**

#### **IX. Adjourn public session and continue to Executive session in separate zoom link- 8:03 PM**

Motion to adjourn: Roy Martinez

C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(a) to hold conference with the Board's attorney to receive legal advice on specific legal questions, pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(b); matters required to be kept confidential by federal or state law or rules and regulations pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4).

Moved to executive session to hear from attorneys on legal matters.