



### **Advisory Board Meeting Summary**

Thursday, August 21, 2025

10:30 AM to Noon

Location: Virtual

#### **Board Members Present**

|   |   |  |   |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Bev Berns (Vice Chair)</b><br>Keystone AEA                   | X | <b>Seth Harms</b><br>West Delaware High School             |   | <b>Anderson Sainci</b><br>City of Dubuque | X |
| <b>Sue Burrack</b><br>Waldorf University                        | X | <b>Doreen Hayek (Chair)</b><br>University of Northern Iowa | X |   |   |
| <b>Kendra Crooks</b><br>Extension and Outreach                  |   | <b>Jeff Jacobs</b><br>TDS Automation                       | X |   |   |
| <b>Rachel Dillavou</b><br>Boys & Girls Club of the Cedar Valley | X | <b>Marla Loecke</b><br>Iowa Workforce Development          | X |   |   |
| <b>Larry Escalada</b><br>University of Northern Iowa            | X | <b>Allison Plunkett</b><br>John Deere Dubuque Works        | X |   |   |

X – Present

**Others in Attendance:** Jeff Beneke (Northeast Iowa Regional STEM Hub), Justin Lewis (Iowa STEM Council), Lucy Galloway (Northeast Iowa Regional STEM Hub), and Brayden Hunt and James Peng (Youth STEM Ambassador Group)

#### **Meeting Summary**

The board meeting was called to order at 10:35 AM.

### **Iowa STEM Youth Ambassadors**

The Iowa STEM Youth Ambassador Group is comprised of Iowa youth from middle school to college age who have a passion or interest in science, technology, engineering or mathematics.

The Iowa STEM Youth Ambassador Group aims to:

1. Provide a youth perspective to Iowa STEM.
2. Expand Iowa STEM's reach to Iowa youth.
3. Be a community STEM advocate.
4. Engage with Iowa STEM events.

The statewide Iowa STEM Youth Ambassador group consists of four students from Northeast Iowa. Students represent Dubuque Senior High School, Western Dubuque High School and two from Cedar Falls High School.

### **Budget/Expenditures**

Beneke presented the fiscal year 2025 year-end financial statement, noting that the Northeast Region an unexpended balance of approximately \$1,650 under the contracted Scale-Up/Festival amount.

As of July 31, 2025, year-to-date expenditures for the Northeast Iowa STEM Hub totaled approximately \$14,525 representing about 2% of the fiscal year 2026 budget.

### **FY25 Year-End Report – Northeast Iowa STEM Region**

Beneke reviewed the Northeast Iowa STEM Hub's FY2025 year-end report and distributed copies to Board members.

### **Update on Scale-Up Awards**

Beneke provided an update on the Scale-Up awards.

### **STEM Festivals**

During FY26, the plan is to host the Cedar Valley Family STEM Festival on October 16 again in Waverly and the Northeast Iowa Family STEM Festival in Waukon on April 30 at the Waukon High School.

The Board discussed possible festival locations in Jackson and Jones counties, as well as virtual options for hosting a festival. Beneke also noted possibly hosting in Buchanan and Chickasaw counties. The STEM Hub will continue exploring these locations and options.

### **Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Motion by Loecke, seconded by Sainci, to appoint Hayek as Chair and Berns for Vice Chair of the 2025-2026 Northeast Iowa Regional STEM Advisory Board. Motion carried.

### **FY26 meeting dates**

Meetings were scheduled for the remainder of the calendar year. The next Board meeting will be held virtually on October 23 at 10:00AM, followed by an in-person meeting on December 16 at 10:00AM.

### **Iowa STEM Council Updates**

Lewis provided the following update.

- On August 17, during STEM Day at the State Fair, the Governor signed Executive Order 14, which

supersedes earlier orders. Key provisions include: 1.) administrative operations vesting with the STEM Bureau Chief in the Iowa Department of Education, 2.) the reduction of the STEM Executive Council from 70 members to approximately 20 members, and 3.) a directive for the Council to identify strategies to equip teachers and students to use artificial intelligence (AI) ethically and effectively. A copy of the Executive Order was shared with Board members.

- The Scale-Up Request for Proposal will be released soon. There will be changes to the process for 2026-27. The first change is that a proposal will be submitted to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and not an application submitted through iowagrants.gov. Fewer programs will be selected for the 2026-27 Scale-Up Program Menu. Proposals submitted will need to consider a three-year approach.
- The STEM Teacher Award Nominations opened on August 17 and will close October 22. Google is sponsoring the award again this year.
- STEM Best application will open on September 3 and will close November 10.
- The Iowa STEM Summit will be on October 17 at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines. Agenda and registration will be released soon.

### **Announcements**

Board members volunteered to evaluate STEM Teacher Award applications and STEM BEST applications.

### **Important Dates**

| Event/Activity                                 | Date        | Time                 | Location   |
|--|-------------|----------------------|------------|
| STEM BEST Application opens                    | September 3 | 8:00 AM              | NA         |
| STEM BEST Enhancement Application opens        | October 1   | 8:00 AM              | NA         |
| Cedar Valley STEM Festival                     | October 16  | 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM   | Waverly    |
| STEM Summit                                    | October 17  | All Day              | Des Moines |
| Northeast Regional STEM Advisory Board meeting | October 23  | 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM | Virtual    |
| STEM BEST Enhancement application closes       | November 5  | 4:59PM               | NA         |
| STEM BEST Application closes                   | November 10 | 4:59PM               | NA         |

Meeting adjourned at noon.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 23.