



Advisory Board Meeting Summary

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

10:30 AM to Noon

Location: Virtual

Board Members Present

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

X – Present

Others in Attendance: Jeff Beneke (Northeast Iowa Regional STEM Hub), and Ann Gritzner (Iowa STEM Council).

Meeting Summary

Doreen called the board meeting to order at 10:30 AM.

Budget/Expenditures

Beneke presented the Year-to-Date financial statement. As of November 30, 2025, year-to-date expenditures for the Northeast Iowa STEM Hub totaled approximately \$470,000 representing about 62% of the overall fiscal year 2026 budget.

Update on Scale-Up Awards

Beneke provided an update on the FY26 Scale-Up programs.

Beneke also provided a preview of the three programs that have been selected for the FY2027 Scale-Up menu. A Notice of Intent to Award has been issued to the three providers, subject to final contract negotiations and acceptance. Beginning in 2026, the goal of the STEM Scale-Up model will be to provide sustained support to educational organizations and schools over a three-year period to strengthen educator professional practice and enhance student learning.

The FY27 Educator Scale-Up application is planned to open on January 27 and close on March 10.

STEM Festivals

The Cedar Valley Family STEM Festival occurred on October 16 at Wartburg College in Waverly. Beneke presented the festival report. The festival had 53 exhibitors representing 740 people in attendance.

Planning is underway for the Northeast Iowa Family STEM Festival which will be held on Thursday, April 9 from 5:00 PM to 7:30 PM at the Waukon High School Gym in Waukon.

Programming Updates

Iowa STEM Teacher Award – Applications for the Iowa STEM Teacher Award closed on November 5. Sixty-five applications were received from teachers across the state. The Northeast Iowa STEM Region received 25 teacher applications. Thank you to Larry and Jeff for reviewing applications.

STEM BEST Applications – The state received 17 New STEM BEST applications (four from the Northeast) and 31 Returning STEM BEST applications (four from the Northeast).

Awards are still pending final approval from the STEM Council; however, Beneke noted all four “New” applications from the Northeast, along with at least two “Returning” applications, were selected award.

Thank you to Doreen, Bev and Allison for reviewing applications.

STEM BEST Enhancements – The STEM Council received 18 applications for the STEM BEST Enhancement grant. Five applications were submitted from the Northeast STEM Region and four of those applications were awarded. They were:

- Waverly-Shell Rock Community School District
- Holy Family Catholic Schools
- Easton Valley Community School District
- Allamakee Community School District

STEM Teacher Externship

Ann Gritzner presented on the STEM Teacher Externship program. Placements start March 1. Businesses select teachers and the teacher has first right for acceptance or refusal. Link to PowerPoint: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LZdRC6Fi7nKvGLEcyR-VVewdRHidOG3->

Iowa STEM Council updates

Gritzner shared STEM Day at the Capitol will take place on February 18, when recipients of the STEM Teacher Award will be recognized. Schools and informal organizations will also be exhibiting Scale-Up and STEM Best programs.

Board meeting dates for 2026

The next meetings will be scheduled for January 22 from 11:30AM to 1:00PM and March 31 from 11:30AM to 1:00PM. Both meetings will be held virtually.

Announcements

Kendra mentioned the State Science Fair will occur in Ames this Spring. If you are interested in judging, please reach out to Kendra.

Allison mentioned the FIRST Robotics Competition kickoff is January 10.

The Midwest FRC event takes place from March 26-28 at the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls.

Important Dates

Event/Activity	Date	Time	Location
Northeast Regional STEM Advisory Board meeting	January 22	11:30 AM to 1:00 PM	Virtual
Scale-Up Educator Application opens - tentative	January 27	NA	Iowagrants.gov
STEM Day at the Capitol	February 18	9:00 AM to 1:00 PM	Capitol, Des Moines
Scale-Up Educator Application Deadline - tentative	March 10	4:59 PM	Iowagrants.gov
Northeast Regional STEM Advisory Board meeting	March 31	11:30 AM to 1:00 PM	Virtual
Northeast Iowa Family STEM Festival	April 9	5:00 PM to 7:30 PM	Waukon High School

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.

The next meeting is scheduled to be virtual on Thursday, January 22 from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM.