

Course Setting Conversation Summary – STEM Advisory Council Meeting, July 2019

Question 1: Consider the strengths and weaknesses of the Council's STEM Education portfolio and offer us suggestions for where we could do more to advance our mission to "increase the interest and achievement of Iowa preK-12 youth in STEM" *especially the underserved.*

- Continue to work with a variety of agencies and organizations to grow networks and collaborate effectively. Utilize community organizations that serve underserved (United Way specifically). They have access to robust data, we can contact community impact directors at United Way, and United Way can be an umbrella to work with other specific organizations. Another group to consider reaching out to might be Children and Families Council throughout Iowa.
- Push STE into M (math is in everything).
- Have done a good emphasizing the interdisciplinary approach, focus more on the "bread and butter" disciplines and how to get from here to there (which disciplines are needed for which careers).
- Targeting new populations with our messaging via newsletters from other organizations. We should have a presence on different platforms other than just our marketing platforms.
- Higher Ed partners would welcome some input from STEM Council members and STEM Hub leaders about how to attract and retain students in Higher Ed/College/University teacher certification degrees. Unknown as to whether or not we have made any improvements as far as the number of teachers filling the Iowa teaching pipeline in STEM.
- Focus on long-term questions – how are certain things impacting the workforce in Iowa?
- Can the STEM Council help teachers receive more support from administrator or facilitate more connections to administrators so they can help lead implementation and integration of programs?
- Break the silos and build a culture.
- Collect data on who continues Scale-Up (publicize), and how do we support educators in their efforts to sustain our various STEM programming (like a how-do guide).
- Reaching teachers and parents – what are we doing for the adults who are the most important influencers in a student's life?
 - 1) Ongoing, supportive, rigorous.
 - 2) Focus on the populations that have less education that our awareness data indicates have less knowledge of the STEM council.
 - 3) How is STEM being defined? Clarify this for all – or make it public for all.

Question 2: In doing more, or doing new things in a given area, limited resources require distribution of human and/or financial resources. From where should we pull to re-direct resources?

- Put a request for a STEM Liaison at each district level. Could be TLC or Ins Coach. Need to have regular contacts in the region.
- Assign priorities to the things we do to visualize how new ideas really fit into our priorities, then discuss how we need to allocate resources. Look at reprioritizing, start with what we NEED to be doing and go from there – how much do we need to achieve them.
- Relook at Microsoft Imagine Academy and advocacy at legislative level.
- Reach out to corporate outreach groups to capitalize on their resources (ie. Google, Apple, Microsoft to bring resources to Iowa). What is their community involvement already and how can we integrate outreach for resources (\$) even out of state.
- Note sure where resources would come from, but definitely move to Communications/Messaging – Need for clearer communications and messaging on our website, focusing on “here is why it applies to you” and “here is why you need this”, or possibly even one tag line. The terminology STEM BEST and Scale-Up are confusing.
- Focus majority on budget on areas that have the highest impact.
- Connect kids to opportunities/resources to go into STEM fields. This could help identify new donor fields (family focused organizations/companies).
- STEM Festivals – short, many attend who already have STEM on their radar. So, narrow target niches for STEM festivals and reduce number of festivals.
 - Alternatives: hubs publicize festivals in the communications, but reallocate hub’s time and money to bussing students to event (transportation barriers).
 - Target under-represented populations/events (not strictly a STEM festival, perhaps a cultural festival).

Question 3: How well are we leveraging your own investments in service to our Council?

- Educational Examiners are often not at the table, their programs are not known.
- Leveraging Dept. of Education more, which is a good thing. Also connecting back to state standards.
- Continue partnering with agencies and organizations to blend everything together. We (STEM Council and other agencies and organizations) are all pieces to a greater puzzle. We need to work together to complete the puzzle.
- Like infrequent meeting, because of busy schedules. Would be worthwhile to compile information about each Council/Board members skill sets (directory). Create a calendar of events for Council members.
- Would love to see a Council director with bio and pictures.

- Better communications for Council members, including succinct common message, clear direction on how to promote our programming, and regular updates from committees (ie. Equity).
- Leverage business partners by highlighting what they are doing in STEM, and ask them to share with their employees/families.
- Figure out how to better leverage other STEM programs within schools and organizations. Some organizations have their own STEM teach, like the Dept. of Education. Encourage collaboration across all disciplines in applications for programs. English departments can edit the application, etc.
- Unsure if Council members are being “maximized” – the full teams don’t get together very often to know how things are going. Bring Council Members and Regional Boards together for a meeting.
- Can STEM Council members bring in others from our organization to the council’s efforts

Question 4: What “grade” would you assign to this organization and why?

- “A” – Progress over years speaks for yourself, on the right track.
- “A” – Good in comparison to other states. Have done well with volunteers, but could do better with more communication to target rural and diverse groups. Get more qualitative and quantitative data. Focus on “are students going into STEM careers?” and for data collected get better benchmark of students before and students after STEM Scale-Up. Keep being honest about the impact we’re really having.
- “B+” – Amazing job, known across USA and with Iowa legislature, but always room for improvement. Get trusted community members to advocate, has to come from “inside” communities.
- “C+” – The STEM Council needs to be more inclusive for under-represented populations, LGBT and persons with disabilities. They should be our target. Also Latina and other ethnic backgrounds of students should be a focus.