

# STEM School

## Board of Directors Meeting

November 10, 2020

5:30pm – 7:00pm

Zoom meeting

### Minutes

#### **I. Call to Order:** 5:35 PM MST

Directors present: Nicole Smith, Michael Green, Ramesh Thatavarthi, Roy Martinez, and Rudy Lukez

**i Roll Call:** conducted by Rudy Lukez

**ii Pledge of Allegiance** lead by Roy Martinez

**II. Reciting of the Mission Statement** by Nicole Smith

#### **III. Review and approval of previous board meeting minutes:**

Roy Martinez noted there was an error in the October 6, 2020 minutes: It was not an executive session. Dr. Eucker has confirmed that this has been corrected.

Motion: Approval of the previous board minutes as corrected

Motioned to approve: Michael Green

Seconded by: Ramesh Thatavarthi

All directors approved, and motion passed

#### **IV. Student leadership report:** 5:40 PM MST

No Students present, Nicole Bostel shares the notes from the Student Government:

- The Student Government has been unable to set up drive-in movies due to logistics, but will continue to work on virtual events for the future
- They have sent two surveys out to students:
  - 1: Student feedback on how the year is going: Results reflect that student feel positively so far
  - 2: Forming a Student Advisory Committee: Many secondary students have expressed interest in being in the committee

#### **V. Auditor Report- Jim Hinkle, Hinkle & Company:** 5:50-6:06 PM MST

Jim Hinkle presented a summary of our audit report that ended June 31 2020

He explained the audit process in order to determine whether there are deficiencies or weaknesses in the internal controls in our ordinary course of business.

Results of Hinkle & Company Audit:

- There were no significant deficiencies or weaknesses identified
- The financial statements are prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and applied on a consistent basis with the previous year (Unmodified opinion)
- There were no disagreements with management, have any difficulties getting through the audit, and there were no missed or uncorrected errors
- They are not aware of management speaking with any other auditors

Overview: Audit was done virtually and seamlessly. All deadlines were met and the auditors had full transparency and cooperation from STEM.

Question/ Answer

Question (Nicole Smith) : How can we get even better? Are there any controls that your team would recommend to us to establish even better practices?

Answer: During the pandemic, having very close oversight over the financial position of the school to make sure that it is staying in the financial capabilities to mitigate surprises.

Question (Rudy Lukez): Can you confirm that our accounting practices compare to how the district expects us to operate?

Answer: STEM does follow suit with DCSD expectations.

Question (Rudy Lukez): In general, do we operate in a higher level of proficiency than other Charter schools that Hinkle & CO audits?

Answer: STEM's accounting practices are very strong. Some other charter schools do not have the strength and manpower to be able to do that. STEM has an excellent expenditure/income relationship that does reflect some strength that the other schools do not have.

The board extends their gratitude to Star Ake and her team, who continue to provide excellent results for STEM year after year.

#### **VI. 2021-2022 Calendar Approval: 5:42 PM-5:50 PM MST**

Summary provided by Dr. Eucker:

- We have corrected the calendar to reflect the COVID19-related delayed start this year
- The proposal for next year's calendar is to start August 10, 2021 to give us a 4.9 day buffer and to meet the state laws

Question/Answer

Question (Roy Martinez): Do we have confirmation on the graduation date, time, and location, and do we anticipate any changes?

Answer: Graduation will take place on May 20, 2021 at 2 PM at the stadium. We do not anticipate that changing.

Motion to approve the changes to the 2020-2021 calendar:

Motioned by: Michael Green

Seconded by: Nicole Smith

All directors approved, and motion passes

Motion to approve the 2021-2022 calendar:

Motioned by: Nicole Smith

Seconded by: Michael Green

All directors approved, and motioned passes

#### **VII. Executive Director's Report 6:07-6:45 PM MST**

Announcement (Stephanie Mendrala):

After 9 amazing years, she will be taking a position as an educational consultant that works with schools throughout the nation. She knows that these are unique times in education and at our school and wants to emphasize that she has loved working at STEM. It is emotional for her to imagine life without STEM, which will always be a part of her family.

Comment (Rudy Lukez): When you have a great organization and hire great people, they go on to grow and accomplish other great things.

#### **i School nurse report-**

Message from Karen Lewis RN, presented by Nicole Bostel

- Karen is in constant communication with Tri-County Health and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.
- She is staying up to date on the latest news about COVID and keeping STEM informed.
- Maintaining a collaborative effort between herself, parents, and STEM staff.
- Karen has shared a home screener with links to help families follow their symptoms and recommendations.
- We have had 2 cases that did not result in any other cases at STEM.

**ii Director of Communications report-** Nicole Bostel (sharing a slideshow presentation)  
2019-20 Communications:

- Over the last year, Nicole learned the processes that were already in place before adding a Student and Staff Newsletter
- She is maintaining the existing communication team responsibilities, media relations, and advertisements

Analytics :

- STEM newsletters have a higher open rate and click rate than the national education industry
- Links are used to reduce scrolling for Mobile Users.
- Focus is on making the student newsletter a little more enticing to increase open rate
- Videos were the most reached, clicked and reacted to.
- The majority of traffic for the STEM website is at the beginning and end of the week in the evening.
- From September 2019 to April 2020 we have increased followers and decreased in likes, but nothing that made a huge impact

What we are doing well:

- Share your good news link: which is a process to submit news event items, has been successful.
- Collaboration with stakeholders.
- Revamp of newsletters/ addition of staff and student newsletter, and social media presence
- New website launched in July 2020

Areas of improvement

- Reinforcement of communication processes and channels
- Broaden the incorporation of communications strategies and techniques
- Solidify the STEM voice, and reinforce the STEM Brand

What to expect for 2020-21 School year

- Continued Improvement to the new website
- We are hiring a new addition to the communications team with enhanced video and social media capabilities
- Updates to the communications plan to incorporate strategic plan goal alignment
- Intentional and strategic communications for parents at each school level (with involvement of School Directors), and for staff and students

Question/ Answer:

Question (Ramesh Thatavarthi): Are planning to expand to any other social media platforms besides Facebook?

Answer: STEM currently has Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook and Youtube accounts, but Facebook is what we are really focusing on. Twitter interactions are mostly with our media partners. There is some hesitation with Instagram because some students may not be media cleared. We will also be revamping our Youtube page.

Question (Ramesh Thatavarthi): How is our engagement with industry leaders and corporations?

Answer: We will get the most impact through cross collaboration of PTECH with our industry partners through LinkedIn.

Comment (Rudy Lukez): Maybe we should think about developing strategic communication/ journalism/ social media/ public relations courses with the new hire.

Response: Nicole's passion is in strategic communication and would defer to Dan Levinson for video and photography and Allison Doe for social media business if there is interest in developing a course.

**VIII. PTO update:** 6:45-6:49 PM MST

Provided by Georgia Maya, PTO Secretary -

- There are 5 teacher grants that have been submitted and 2 more may be coming in.
- PTO is accepting food donations for the teacher lounges.
- There is a link on MySchoolBucks for teacher giving, active through December 9, 2020
- There are 4 board positions open, which will be posted on the website

Question/Answer

Question (Roy Martinez): What is the current amount for fundraising this year?

Answer: George will share that with Nicole to forward on. Roy will join the meeting next week.

**IX. SAC update** 6:49-6:53 PM MST

Erin Gomez presenting

- Teacher's report that workload at STEM is higher than other schools due to innovative curriculum
- SAC does not feel that they can advise on the STEM Budget and CaresAct, they do not feel like they have access or visibility to those reports

Comment (Nicole Smith): I would be happy to provide myself as a point of contact for finances. Also, all our finances are available on the website, due to our full transparency policy. I will meet with you to answer any questions you have to ensure that you can do your duty.

**X. Public comment** 6:53- 7:00 PM MST

1. Mike Brevoort, father of 5 students at STEM, wants to address STEM's decision to pursue membership in CHSAA. Once we join CHSAA students will lose the opportunity to play competitively, because right now they can play any sport at any level they want, while enjoying the top tier academics that STEM provides. Going to CHSAA will divert resources away from our strengths, and force students to make a choice between leaving the school to play competitively, play for STEM, or not play at all.
2. Erin Gomez: There are only 5 Board of Directors and there are supposed to be 9. Will there be any effort to fill Trevor Killpatrick's slot? Two board members should be appointed every May, and I was wondering when I should expect that to happen and how that all works?
  - Comment (Rudy Lukez): We are allocated up to 9 members, 3 parent members (3 year terms), which is what the election is for every May. Last May, Michael Green was elected onto our board. The other 6 are board members who are supposed to come from other categories that will reinforce the school, and do not need to be a parent of a student. Rudy would be happy to talk more about this.

**XI. Adjourn Public Session** at 7:00 PM MST

Motion to adjourn the November 10, 2020 Board Meeting

Motioned by: Michael Green

Seconded by: Nicole Smith

All directors approved, and motion passes

**XII. No Executive Session Needed**

**Board Meeting Officially Adjourned** at 7:01PM MST