



STEM School SAC Meeting Minutes and Action Items



Date: February 15, 2017	Meeting Chair: R.Borchert/K.Weiffenbach	Location: STEM School Elem Library
	Recorder: L.Kingman	Time: 6-8:00p

Attendees

Committee members	Role	Present	Role	Present	
Renee Borchert	Co-chair*	Y	Cody Blackburn	STEM HS Principal	Y
Karyn Weiffenbach	Co-chair*	Y	Naomi Ewing	STEM College Counselor	Y
Jeannie Kerr	Vice-chair*	Y	Lauren Hutton	STEM 4th grade teacher	Y
Dr. Karen Johnson	STEM Elem Principal*	Y	Katelyn Rooney	STEM Language Arts, Drama teacher, Cross Country coach	Y
Lynne Paris	PTS Rep (STEP)*	Y	Erin Gomez, Carin Buster, Jennifer Sandwisch, Inge Brazelton, Ed Spencer	STEM Parents	Y
Lori Kingman	Recorder/Elem Rep	Y			
TBD	Community Rep	N			

*Voting member

Acronyms

DCSD BOE = Douglas County School District Board of Education

BOD: STEM Board of Directors

DAC: District Accountability Committee: <https://www.dcsdk12.org/district-accountability-committee>

CDE: Colorado Dept of Education

Agenda, Action Items, and Meeting Notes

	Agenda Item	Topic Member	Minutes: Topic Summary	Questions & Action Items	Action Item Origination Date	Date Due	Moved to Closed or Backlog doc
1	Welcome / Introductions / Celebrations	Renee Borchert, STEM SAC Co-Chair	Introductions were made around the table. Meeting was attended by SAC, Karen Johnson, Cody Blackburn, Naomi Ewing, Lauren Hutton, Katelyn Rooney and several parents in attendance.				
2	January meeting minutes approved by SAC	Lori Kingman, STEM SAC Recorder	Lori confirmed January meeting minutes were approved.				
3	Guest Presentation: STEM College Counseling	Naomi Ewing, STEM College Counselor Cody Blackburn, STEM HS Principal	<p>Cody introduced Naomi and the background of recruiting her to STEM. Important to get someone that represented the brand of STEM. Naomi has worked for years in the private school system in Chicago in college counseling and has been a prior college admissions representative. First graduating class had 24 students. Last year we had 53 students graduate – applied to 40 – 50 schools, awarded \$1M in scholarships, Ivy League acceptances (U Penn). Naomi has national and international connections.</p> <p>Naomi tried to tailor presentation to the 27 questions. Tries to get the best outcome for all the constituents she serves – Students, Employers, Parents, Career Professionals, Faculty/Staff, Third Party Vendors (Ex: Test Prep companies, scholarship search companies, financial planner). March 15 – K-10 Financial Planning session – Naomi needs help with attendance/promotion of the event. Need to reschedule SAC March meeting so that it doesn't conflict with Naomi's session.</p>				

		<p>“Best” fit concept is not always “most selective” college. 1 Boettcher scholarship recipient, 2 semi-finalists. The winner turned it down since he went to U of Penn (out of state). Step one is knowing oneself doing the ICAP and research options. Matching student with best fit. Naomi teaches that process. Successful college experience: Program, Place, People, Price, “How College Works” (recommended book). Misconception that most selective means best fit. Try to look at where the college is putting their money – research, financial aid, etc. Are they putting money where you think fits the best? Doesn’t like college rankings (some factors that improve ranking: presidents of schools rank each other, size of endowment). Would like families to look at student engagement. How does that college engage my student and take them from point A to point B? Recommends looking at post-graduate placement.</p> <p>College visits – need to get teacher permission. If student is failing, then they shouldn’t go. If teacher still doesn’t allow them to attend, then Naomi will intervene. Students must sign up through Naviance and must attend (Naomi will take attendance). Early decision is a binding agreement (STEM will not process any further college applications after you accept early decision), no negotiation of financial aid, usually decision is done in early December.</p> <p>Question from parent: Have you heard if colleges prefer AP to CE? Colorado public colleges guarantee acceptance of CE credits. We may be the only DCSD school with a college counselor that is separate from the general counseling staff. Naomi has recommended that students who take CE course take the corresponding AP Exam since you don’t need to take the AP course to sit for the exam. Parents need to check with colleges (especially out of state or private colleges) if they accept credits (AP/CE). CE for in-state colleges can be a big money saver.</p> <p>Question from Parent: Since there are no honors in 9th grade, how can my incoming 9th grader still maintain that appearance of rigor? Answer: CE could be solution for rigor. There are actually more AP offerings next year – AP Government, AP Environmental Science, Calc BC, Differential Equations, Linear Algebra.</p> <p>Question: Is the “Best fit” concept unique to STEM? Answer: Per Naomi, no. But she is not sure if public schools in DCSD have college counselors who know this or if they are general counselors that don’t follow the “best” fit concept.</p> <p>What are you doing to recruit top colleges? Naomi has a lot of 4 year college contacts. Fleshed out her knowledge / contacts of 2-year colleges which she did not have before.</p> <p>Your child is in the driver’s seat in this process. Parents need to understand that your student is in the driver’s seat. That is challenging for parents. Wants parents to send their student to her. We are in this together.</p> <p>ICAP:(on Student Support page on STEM website):</p>				
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		<p>7th grade: Research self, research options, standardized testing 8th grade: 9th grade: College visits to STEM, local college fairs Naomi educates schools/employers about unique features of STEM (like we have humanities and arts students as well), about unique features/programs. Naomi attends national committees to keep abreast of college acceptance trends, college testing trends. Definitely gets feedback from colleges on students and we are visited by alums. Top schools will not come to visit our school – they will do “dog and pony” show elsewhere but can ask Naomi where these are.</p> <p>Ranking students in a class of less than 300 students makes a 4.0 GPA student hit in the 80th percentile rank in a class of high-performing students. This is why STEM will not provide GPA/Class rank. Next year: STEM will have 600 total HS students. Thunderridge HS will have 600 students just in freshman class.</p> <p>School Profile is published on STEM website now. Naomi publishes the most recent year – lots of schools publish where students have gone over the last 5 years. Naomi believes it’s important to apply to Reach, Target and Safety schools. Doesn’t aim for 75% acceptance rate b/c of “best fit”.</p> <p>We don’t have a lot of interest for attending out of state colleges. Naomi guesses that the decisions are financial based. And Colorado colleges are not necessarily the cheapest plan. Parent question: Why? Answer: WUE (Western Undergraduate Exchange). 150% Wyoming in-state is far cheaper than in-state Colorado college.</p> <p>Important for students to attend college visits to show interest. Program Evaluation: They are doing an exit survey. Doing a survey about mentor program (first year). International college programs: Naomi pioneered international college visits in Colorado (never before in Colorado). Naomi did this in Chicago.</p> <p>Number of college visits – 36 (12 last year) Processed 175 college applications (53 last year) 78 different schools (31) 93% of class (65%) How can parents help?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage students to self-advocate. Teachers and staff need to get to know your student – not you. - Help students look “inward”. - Allow students to fail. Some of the best applications and recommendations speak to the experiences of failure. - Have a financial plan - Lead, don’t push 				
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			<p>Parent question: What about the 504 students and how do they fair when they apply to college? We have a large population of 504 or special needs students at STEM.</p> <p>Answer: The IEP/504 isn't a bad mark for colleges. The colleges look at how the student self-advocates and are they working hard. OK to say that you have X disability on college application if you can tell the story of how you overcame challenges. Families need to understand if your child gets a specific curriculum (ex: world language courses are waived) in HS, that a college may not even accept that student since they require world language.</p> <p>Parent question: When should 504 students start talking to their counselor about college? Answer: 7th / 8th grade. They should begin with their regular counselor.</p> <p>Parent question: Do teachers receive training on how to complete college recommendation form? Answer: Yes, they provide guidance on the process for completing the form.</p>				
4	Principal's Report	Cody Blackburn, STEM HS Principal and Dr. Karen Johnson, STEM Elem Principal	<p>i. Elementary – K-1 playground on track to be completed by 2/28. A lot of field trips. Snow Mountain Ranch, NCAR, Denver Museum of Nature & Science, Greenfield, NOAA. One teacher retiring. Other highlights: 100 Day, Valentine Day (designing and engineering boxes). Community service projects (birthday boxes for homeless kids).</p> <p>ii. Middle School – Principal coffee went well. Successful MS dance. Continuing to work on branding. Will be recruiting for open positions within the next month. Please write a note to a teacher with a positive comment. February funk is going on.</p> <p>iii. High School – Been doing a lot of career discovery interviews. Impressed with students. Focused on students who are applying for career-wise internships (college credit, paid, on-the-job experience). CyberPatriot HS team competed. An entire school district closed down and came to visit STEM and learn / work with our teachers. Engaged with CDE and Nathan Yip for rural outreach programs. Denver Post article on STEM World History students should come out on Friday. Colorado Matters interviewed STEM students. August 27 (Sunday) – Fun Run/Walk 5K/ Blast-off at Redstone Park. Open to all of Douglas County. Good fundraiser for our HS sports. Parent question: Can kids who have never played lacrosse join Lacrosse team? Yes. Field at STEM will be built out (not full size soccer field) – Phase 2 – need funds to complete.</p>				
5	Staff Report	Lauren Hutton and Katelyn Rooney,	Katelyn Rooney – Invention Idea program to present to Denver Post to help cyclists and runners to stay safe during their workouts. Will present March 2 nd / 3 rd . Would welcome parent support. Has established casts for 2 spring plays (one horror, one comedy).				

		STEM Faculty	Lauren Hutton – Praise for the music program, Mr. Paul. Great that they are teaching guitar to kids.				
6	STEP Report	Lynne Paris, STEM SAC - PTS Rep	Highlights are upcoming check writing campaign, lots of STEP positions open so if parents are interested, email Lynne Paris.				
7	DAC Report		No update as DAC is preparing for DAC forum on 2/28 at Rocky Heights MS - 6 - 8 pm.				
	BOD Report	Karyn Weiffenbach, Renee Borchert, STEM SAC Co-Chairs	<p>Reminder that the application deadline for the 2 new Class A positions (you must be a parent) to March 13. 20 hours a month commitment, need to possess strategic view, work well with BOD members, marketing/fundraising interest. Board meets the first Tuesday of each month at 5:30.</p> <p>Special projects: Raspberry Pi project to build special ringtones,</p> <p>Outdoor area could be an outdoor classroom or eating area. Adding 50 first and 50 second graders by reconfiguring the classroom space.</p> <p>Budget report – we have an investor rating due to good financial standing which helps us with debt agreeing.</p> <p>Waitlisted students who are sophomore or above should meet with Cody to ensure it will be a good fit.</p> <p>Potential for kids to get a Varsity Letter in Robotics.</p> <p>STEM FEST on April 1.</p> <p>Graduation May 19 (last year at Wildlife Experience).</p> <p>1,778 is the projected enrollment for next year.</p> <p>STEM Academy structure: looking at putting together an offering catalog.</p> <p>Branding in progress and strategic plan – updates on both in March.</p> <p>Diversity at STEM is one of the highest in DCSD.</p>				
	STEM Buddy Mentor Program	Jeannie Kerr, SAC Vice President	Jeannie met with Denise to start a buddy/mentor program for new parents to STEM. Will try to match a current family up with a new family (same or close to same grades). Hope to get an announcement out in the March newsletter right after spring break. Question from Karen J: Can we leverage the School Directory to help with the buddy/mentor program?				

	STEM SAC Committee Goals	Lori Kingman, STEM SAC Recorder	<p>4 STEM SAC members participated in submitting goals they had in mind for SAC. Goals were consolidated into one list with submitter kept anonymous and then were ranked according to high, medium and low priority. The consolidated, prioritized list was shared and showed that the highest priority goals centered on three areas of objectives:</p> <p>SAC being a respected resource for STEM Admin, BOD and the parent community.</p> <p>Existing SAC directives (Ex: recommend school budget priorities).</p> <p>Working with school admin to provide more support for special needs students.</p> <p>Next step at the suggestion of Dr. Johnson - review high priority goals of SAC and ensure they align to SAC Bylaws.</p>			
	Project Updates	Dr. Karen Johnson, STEM Elem Principal	<p>i. Survey subcommittee update – Will be put out in Spring. We want to continue with longitudinal data – won't be totally revamped but we do want to make improvements. We do want tailor questions as parents go through survey (Ex: parents of elem kids will get elem questions). Will try to get approval at the next BOD meeting on survey.</p> <p>ii. Community member update – Needs to be a year term. Community member could be a DAC liaison too. Could do election for DAC liaison with the new school year.</p> <p>iii. UIP update – proposal for a subcommittee for the UIP to review and understand it. We must submit it by March 17. Can we plan a UIP meeting in the next week? We are eligible for a bi-yearly submission of our UIP.</p> <p>iv. PARCC update – no PARCC updates. Hannah has the PARCC schedule close to finalized. Will Virtual Days follow the test days? Students who have been excused by parents from taking the tests will probably have a virtual day.</p>			
	Around the table					
8	Close		Next SAC meeting: March 14, 2017 (rescheduled for Tuesday so as not to conflict with STEP meeting and College Financial Planning session on 3/15).			