



First Quarter LaSTEM Advisory Council Meeting
January 31, 2023
9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

The LaSTEM Advisory Council met on Tuesday, January 31, 2023, at the Louisiana Art & Science Museum in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Committee Members/Representatives Present

Kaneisha Akinpelumi (Proxy – Ashwith Chilvery)
Brian Davis
Bianca Deliberto
Jawanda Givens
Crystal Gordon
Commissioner Kim Hunter Reed (arrived after roll call)
Lindsey Keith-Vincent
David Lafargue (arrived after roll call)
Calvin Mackie
Francesca Mellieon-Williams
Ronnie Morris
Frank Neubrandner (arrived after roll call)
Janet Pope (Proxy – Robin Cosenza)
Breigh Rhodes
Scott Stevens
Kellie Taylor-White (arrived after roll call)
Christen Timmins (arrived after roll call)
Rachel Vincent-Finley
William Wainwright
Tina Watts

Committee Members Not Present

Larry Carter, Jr.
Patty Glasser

Paul Helton
Jim Henderson
Sen. Sharon Hewitt
Melissa Mann
Rep. Vincent St. Blanc
Jaimee Williams
Tom Yura

Staff Members Present

Christina Cheek
Clint Coleman
Christine Norton
Carrie Robison

Guests & STEM Center Directors

Mark Arseneault
Daphine Barnes
Wendy Conarro
Cathi Cox-Boniol
Angela Boxie
Summer Dann
Jennifer DePriest
Heather Kleiner
Christie Landry
Otey White & Associates

Welcome and Roll Call

On behalf of Commissioner Kim Hunter Reed, Deputy Commissioner Carrie Robison welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Dr. Coleman called roll, noting quorum was obtained. Dr. Coleman thanked everyone from the Louisiana Art & Science Museum and the Region 8 STEM Center for hosting the LaSTEM Council and invited Cathi Cox-Boniol, Region 8 Director, to say a few words. Next, Dr. Coleman introduced Tracey Barhorst, Interim Curator and Public Programs Manager, to provide remarks on behalf of the Louisiana Art & Science Museum.

Introduction of Otey White & Associates/The Communication Institute (TCI)

Next, Ms. Robison noted as LaSTEM is at the end of the first three-year cycle of the Regional STEM Centers, Regents reached out last fall to the directors and stakeholders to gauge their perspective on opportunities to help improve collective efforts and the LaSTEM profile across Louisiana. As part of the

process, Regents has engaged Otey White & Associates/TCI to help elevate awareness and assist with the LaSTEM Summit, which will take place in October.

Dr. Coleman introduced Barbara Carey with Otey White & Associates. After the introductions, the group split, with the Directors touring the VISTA exhibit while the Council members participated in the focus group with Otey White & Associates.

Ms. Carey engaged the Council members in a group discussion by asking questions such as: Why is LaSTEM important to the future of Louisiana? What is the importance of LaSTEM when speaking to different groups such as students, educators, parents, and industry? What are the strengths of the LaSTEM program? What can be improved? What would you do with \$150,000?

The following points were noted:

- LaSTEM is an investment in the people of Louisiana from early learning to college. To ensure opportunities and retain talent in Louisiana, STEM is the future.
- A technology-based approach to learning is attractive to students, but the practical and hands-on approach to learning would keep them engaged. LaSTEM education is the universal approach to providing this in a way that is sustainable.
- Through STEM learning we create and sustain a viable skilled workforce in Louisiana. LaSTEM should coordinate and promote its workforce development efforts through partnerships with industry, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, Louisiana Economic Development, the Department of Education, and the Workforce Investment Council.
- There is a gap in information-sharing among students and parents regarding STEM pathways and opportunities with LaSTEM.
- Thinking more broadly about STEM as an imperative, we need shifts in mindset around competencies that are built through STEM in order to thrive.
- We must build confidence through STEM education and impress on students that STEM is not just robots, but affects many aspects of everyday life. Through STEM, students must learn not only to use technology, but to create and manipulate it.
- Upskilling and reskilling adults create and foster new opportunities for economic development in all communities within the state.
- STEM literacy for students, parents, and communities is crucial. We should focus on connecting people to STEM where they are, through everyday application such as football statistics and food preparation. All students should be recruited for STEM, since it is necessary from cradle to career.
- We must listen to parents and communities in designing practical experiences to engage students and help them persist.
- LDOE's new science standards support STEM education and give access to professional development and resources for high-quality curricula to teachers. Some schools have experienced barriers in accessing materials to support teachers.
- The education system is preparing the next generation of Louisiana's workforce. We should partner with industry to determine their needs to produce an effective talent pipeline.
- Industry will invest in an ecosystem over a site. Ecosystems can be state, regional, and local.
- We should emphasize our strengths, sharing information and collaborating across the state through our passionate leaders and the support networks at STEM Centers.
- Areas that can be improved include communication with different constituencies; equity of access at different age levels; understanding and communicating the value proposition as an ecosystem; diversity, equity, and inclusion; a five-year plan with goals and a network of STEM interests; developing and sharing asset maps; integrating STEM skills into mathematics; and determining how to match community-based assets with K-12 learning.
- Additional funding and opportunities for STEM in the state include increasing the pipeline through more planning of and access to technology and STEM opportunities for children in rural and urban areas, asset mapping and thinking creatively about how community- and faith-based assets are used, and hiring new talent to leverage the funds.

Introduction of New LaSTEM Advisory Council Members

The directors returned to the Council meeting. Commissioner Reed introduced herself and asked Dr. Coleman to provide new member introductions. He introduced Dr. Francesca Mellieon-Williams from Southern University A&M, a new faculty member, and Mr. Brian Davis, representing the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry. Commissioner Reed welcomed the new members and thanked Otey White & Associates for helping to guide the important messaging work, as LaSTEM is critical for the state today and in the future.

Approval of Fourth Quarter Meeting Minutes

Next, Commissioner Reed called for a motion to approve the previous meeting's minutes.

On motion from Mrs. Breigh Rhodes, seconded by Dr. William Wainwright, the Council approved the fourth quarter meeting minutes as submitted.

LaSTEM Regional Directors (Statewide Initiatives)

Commissioner Reed noted the importance for the Council and the Center Directors of hearing about the successes achieved by the LaSTEM Regional Centers and their ongoing work. Dr. Coleman reminded Council members that each Center was asked to allocate up to 25% of their budget (\$70,000) for leadership of or participation in a statewide initiative, to ensure the network shares successful ideas and collaborates on important statewide initiatives. The goal of the statewide initiatives is to develop programs/solutions that can either be spearheaded at a particular center or made 'turn-key' ready, for other centers to adopt. Dr. Coleman introduced two STEM Center Directors to share their chosen statewide initiatives.

- Ms. Summer Dann, Region 2 STEM Center Director (LSU), shared the vision and mission of the Region 2 center, including initiatives and activities such as LSU STEM Pathways, Code.org, and the VEX Robotics Regional Competition, as well as next steps and upcoming events.
 - Mr. Morris asked Ms. Dann to identify the Center's biggest opportunity and biggest challenge in the coming year. Ms. Dann stated that its biggest opportunity is the expansion of STEM Pathways and dual enrollment across the state. Currently academic courses have a transfer matrix but technical courses do not. She noted this biggest opportunity is also the biggest challenge. Mr. Morris asked Ms. Dann about TechNext, and Ms. Dann explained that TechNext, through ExxonMobil, hosts a regional group with technology and industry to upgrade the computer systems in industry due to the increase in cyberattacks.
- Ms. Cathi Cox-Boniol, Region 8 STEM Center Director (LaTech), shared the background of the Center and discussed its statewide initiative, Girls in STEM, along with other activities such as CS4U, Girls Design for Good, Alda Center Project, STEMINIST Fest, and Louisiana Girls Collaborative.
 - Mr. Morris thanked Mrs. Cox-Boniol for her enthusiasm and asked about online learning, which was mentioned in the first component. Specifically, Mr. Morris asked for a discussion of the current situation related to connectivity with students, barriers to connectivity, and improving connectivity. Mrs. Cox-Boniol responded that COVID brought to light problems in rural communities. Equitable access is one of the biggest challenges, which is why the creation of the online suite of opportunities was very important. This was started in October, and data around access to internet/wifi will be collected in the exit survey. She noted that no issues have been reported yet, but that does not mean there are not any out there. Mr. Morris asked her to keep the Council updated.
 - Ms. Christen Timmins asked what grades were considered middle school and if there was a high school component. Mrs. Cox-Boniol replied that 6-8th grades are considered middle school and there is not a high school component. Ms. Timmins encouraged Mrs. Cox-Boniol to follow up with high school students because many students are capable but do not see STEM pathways as options for themselves. Dr. Neubrandner said that the encouragement to pursue STEM pathways must continue through high school and college. Ms. Tina Watts asked Mrs. Cox-Boniol how she was tracking success. Mrs. Cox-Boniol said that she had not identified success metrics and discussion ensued around data collection and state confidentiality laws blocking access to appropriate data. Mr. Morris, Department of Education, and

Legislative representatives encouraged consideration of how current laws/policies can be adjusted to allow data access for LaSTEM and other areas that would benefit students.

Dr. Reed shared enthusiasm for the STEM Center presentations and their ongoing work, thanked Ms. Cox-Boniol and Ms. Dann, and noted takeaways from the conversation.

Finally, Dr. Coleman provided an update on the 2023 Annual LaSTEM Summit, stating the event will take place on October 17, 2023 at the Cajun Dome and Convention Center in Lafayette, Louisiana. A save-the-date and call for presenters was previously sent out through the LaSTEM mailing list. Commissioner Reed added that some of the constructive feedback received in the past included math teachers asking for a more substantial math component. She asked the Council to encourage presenters who can speak to these kinds of opportunities. Dr. Coleman responded that LaSTEM is working with the Louisiana Association of Teachers of Mathematics (LATM) and Louisiana Science Teachers Association (LSTA) to help bridge the mathematics gap. Last, Dr. Coleman noted he is seeking sponsorship support and may be reaching out to for assistance.

Other Business & Adjournment

Commissioner Reed thanked the Louisiana Art & Science Museum for hosting LaSTEM and asked if there was any other business to come before the Council.

There being no other comments or business, a motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Calvin Mackie, with a second by Ms. Crystal Gordon. With all in agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 11:36 a.m.