



**Fourth Quarter LaSTEM Advisory Council Meeting**  
**November 17, 2022**  
**1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

The LaSTEM Advisory Council met on Thursday, November 17, 2022, at England Airpark in Alexandria, Louisiana.

**Committee Members/Representatives Present**

Kaneisha Akinpelumi  
Bianca Deliberto (Proxy – Jean May Brett)  
Jawanda Givens  
Crystal Gordon  
Paul Helton  
Jim Henderson (Proxy – William Drake Owens)  
Commissioner Kim Hunter Reed  
Lindsey Keith-Vincent  
Calvin Mackie  
Ronnie Morris  
Frank Neubrandner  
Janet Pope (Proxy – Robin Cosenza)  
Breigh Rhodes (Proxy Jaime Mixon)  
Kellie Taylor-White  
Christen Timmins (Proxy – Thomas Brett)  
William Wainwright (Proxy – Jimmy Sawtelle)

**Committee Members Not Present**

Mahyar Amouzegar  
Larry Carter, Jr.  
Michael Gaudet  
Patty Glaser  
Sen. Sharon Hewitt  
David Lafargue

Melissa Mann  
Rep. Vincent St. Blanc  
Scott Stevens  
Rachel Vincent-Finley  
Tina Watts  
Jaimee Williams  
Tom Yura

**Staff Members Present**

Christina Cheek  
Clint Coleman  
Carrie Robison  
Jennifer Stevens

**STEM Center Directors**

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

**Welcome and Roll Call**

Dr. Reed welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Dr. Coleman called roll, noting that a quorum was obtained. Dr. Coleman thanked everyone at England Airpark and the Northwestern CENLA Campus for hosting the LaSTEM Council and invited Dr. William Drake Owens, Interim Executive Vice President of External Affairs, to say a few words.

**Introduction of New LaSTEM Advisory Council Members**

Dr. Coleman introduced two new Council members, Ms. Kaneisha Akinpelumi, from Xavier University of Louisiana, representing LAICU, and Representative Vincent “Vinney” St. Blanc, III, representing the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

**Approval of Council Meeting Minutes**

Next, Dr. Reed called for a motion to approve previous meetings' minutes, noting that the Council had been unable to approve the second and third quarter meeting minutes due to quorum not being obtained.

*On motion from Jean May Bret, seconded by Kellie Taylor-White, the Council approved the second and third quarter meeting minutes as submitted.*

**Regional STEM Center Request for Applications (RFA)**

Dr. Reed noted that the three-year authorization cycle for Regional STEM Centers was coming to a close. She thanked the host entities and the directors for their collaborative spirit, enthusiasm, and willingness to jump in and make these STEM Centers a reality in Louisiana.

Dr. Reed indicated that a new RFA would be issued to solicit applications for the next three-year cycle. She introduced Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs Carrie Robison, who provided an overview of changes to the new draft RFA.

Mrs. Robison stated the focus and charge of the Regional STEM Centers as well as the goals and objectives that were adopted by the Council has not changed. Next, she reviewed the timeline and process for the RFA, stating that the selected applicants will be introduced at the second quarter meeting in 2023. Finally, she noted substantive revisions from the previous RFA, including the following:

- The “substantial” contribution by the Host has now been quantified to a commitment of 60% of the dollars provided by Regents and allocated by the Legislature to help fund the operations of the Center. The support can be cash or in-kind support;
- The minimum time commitment of the Center director has been reduced from 100% to 75%. This is in recognition of some of the other activities the directors do for their host entity;
- Applications will be reviewed by an external third-party evaluator and those recommendations will be brought forward to the Council. A detailed rubric was added to the RFA;
- Guidance for budget development was expanded; and
- A common structure for applications was provided.

Questions and concerns raised during discussion included the time commitment for the STEM Center directors, timeline, Council review of application scores, external reviewers (in-state versus national), anticipated funding levels set by the Legislature, potential for new applicants and turnover in regional leadership, concerns about a loss of momentum built over the past three years, the rubric and explanation of context for the evaluators, a transition process and requirement for continued partnership with previous leadership if a new Center is selected, and sustainability and continuity of programs.

Dr. Reed noted that Regents would update the RFA and rubric with the sustainability, transition, and collaboration information, and the Council would be notified of its release and timeline. In addition, the reviewers' recommendations would be provided in advance of the second quarter meeting, to ensure the Council has time to review and is prepared to vote at the second quarter meeting.

**Directors' Retreat Review**

Dr. Coleman stated the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Directors' Retreat took place in Lake Charles, Louisiana on August 19, 2022. Several topics covered at the retreat included LDOE STEM activities, BoR policies and procedures, and success metrics. The main deliverable from the retreat was a collective performance report template, which has allowed all the directors to utilize the same form. In addition, the directors can utilize the collective metrics for individual needs, including grants and other fundraising measures.

Mr. Ronnie Morris asked for ballpark numbers for funding/grants and expectations. Dr. Coleman noted LaSTEM is working towards larger grants from the U.S. Department of Education and that he is working with the national ecosystems on larger grant dollars that can be brought into the state. Each of the directors is also working with local industry to bring in additional funds. Dr. Calvin Mackie asked if a

statewide effort would be planned for the STEM ecosystem to apply for federal CHIPS Act money. Dr. Coleman agreed that it should be a statewide approach and mentioned opportunities to partner with other states on larger projects as well.

### **LaSTEM Regional Directors (Statewide Initiatives)**

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. 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.

- Dr. Wendy Conarro, Region 9 STEM Center Director, shared initiatives and activities including Esports, Louisiana Scholastic Esports Federation (LASEF) Network, and AmeriCorps VISTA partnership.
  - Questions and following discussion included funding of and process for identifying statewide initiatives and the creation of a statewide database, as charged in statute.
- Ms. Jennifer DePriest, Region 6 STEM Center Director, alongside Dr. Leuder from LSU Alexandria, shared several statewide initiatives, including RECIPE for Rural STEM, drones and robotics, and partnerships with other regions. She thanked all the industry and community partners that participated at the fourth quarter meeting.
  - Questions and following discussion included a possible partnership opportunity with STEM NOLA.

Dr. Reed thanked Region 6 and Jennifer DePriest for hosting the fourth quarter meeting and celebrated the energy around STEM conversations across the state.

### **2023 Council Meeting Dates**

The quarterly meeting dates for 2023 are as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, Tuesday, January 31, 2023
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, Thursday, April 20, 2023
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, Thursday, August 10, 2023
- 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, Thursday, November 9, 2023

Dr. Reed asked if there was any other business to come before the Council. Mrs. Jean May Brett thanked the Council and the center directors, noting that QSM distributed \$137,000 in grants to 87 teachers. She also encouraged everyone to think of teachers who should be nominated for the Presidential Award, noting that the nomination period is open until January 6, 2023.

### **Adjournment**

*There being no other comments or business, a motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Jean May-Brett, with a second by Dr. Calvin Mackie. With all in agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 2:51 p.m.*