

# LaSTEM Advisory Council Meeting

February 13, 2020

10:00 a.m.

The LaSTEM Advisory Council met on Thursday, February 13, 2020, in the Claiborne Conference Center located at 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. Dr. David Lafargue, LaSTEM Program Administrator called the meeting to order.

## **Committee Members/Representatives Present**

Senator Sharon Hewitt  
Kim Hunter Reed (Proxy-Dr. Randall Brumfield)  
Mahyar Amouzegar (Proxy-Ryan Bell)  
Bianca Dilberto (Proxy-Jean May Brett)  
Trisha Fos (Proxy-Amy Welch)  
Michael Gaudet  
Patty Glaser (Proxy-Kassie Cuusuchs)  
Crystal Gordon  
Jim Henderson (Proxy-Jeannine Kahn)  
Stephanie Hilferty (Proxy-Barbara Frieberg)  
Calvin Mackie (Proxy-Lawrence Jackson)  
Ronnie Morris  
Frank Neubrandner  
Kristen Reeves  
Susana Schowen, Co-Chair  
Kellie Taylor-White  
Meridith Trahan  
Rachel Vincent-Finley (Proxy-Nastasia Jones)  
William Wainwright  
Superintendent John White (Proxy-Jill Cowart)  
Jaimee Williams (Proxy-Erin Babin)  
Laura Younger  
Tom Yura

## **Staff Members Present**

Susannah Craig  
David Lafargue  
Lisa Vosper

## **Committee Members Not Present**

Larry Carter, Jr.	Melissa Mann
Janet Pope	Scott Stevens
Ken Tucker	

## **Welcome, Roll Call, and Updates**

Dr. David Lafargue called the meeting to order at 10:16 a.m., did roll call, and determined that we have a quorum. He then introduced Senator Sharon Hewitt.

Senator Hewitt welcomed Advisory Council members, especially the new faces, proxies, and guests. She told those in attendance that the meeting today is an exciting meeting because she believes we are hitting a milestone in our work. She was excited everyone is here to hear about the work being planned and that we have money in the budget we are going to be pushing for during this Legislative session. Senator Hewitt said “we are the ones that are going to put Louisiana in a good position so Louisiana can put Louisiana students into Louisiana jobs.” She thanked everyone for their commitment on this effort and for their attendance at today’s meeting.

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*Dr. Lafargue asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 20, 2019, August 21, 2019, and November 20, 2019 LaSTEM Advisory Council meetings. On Motion from Dr. William Wainwright, seconded by Senator Sharon Hewitt, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the minutes from the LaSTEM Advisory Council Meetings.*

Dr. Lafargue informed members and guests that the LaSTEM website has been updated to include all meeting minutes from the inception of the Council in September 2017, along with presentations, and annual reports. He then asked new council members to introduce themselves. Dr. Kenya Messer with the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU), Ronnie Morris with the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), Meridith Trahan, Workforce Investment Council, and Jean May-Brett introduced herself on behalf of Bianca Deliberto who was unable to attend.

Council members were referred to the “save the date” sheet in their meeting packet. This date, October 29, 2020, is the tentative date for the third LaSTEM Annual Summit.

## **Council Discussions**

Dr. Lafargue mentioned that two working groups were created in the November 20, 2019 meeting. One was to explore STEM Pathway Awareness, Incentives, and Recognition for the state and through primary and secondary schools. The second working group was the Regional STEM Center/Director Working Group and will be further discussed after the presentation from Nathan Corley with the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE).

Mr. Corley directed members to their packets for the three documents enclosed. The first two documents were new items now posted on the LDOE website. One is referred to as the key initiatives document. The LDOE has a site where all key initiatives identified by the department are entered. The second document is a map created to enable individuals to observe which schools are participating in Pathways in Louisiana. Mr. Corley indicated this map is based on parishes and not the school districts. The final document is the status of current Pathways. Mr. Corley discussed the number of students enrolled in public and non-public schools. He indicated in the Goal section of the document the numbers shown were provided by the Workforce Commission. He went on to discuss efforts to incentivize school systems, teachers, and the need to incentivizing students. The LDOE has received implementation grants available for some schools to help to overcome the cost of training. They are developing STEM School Indicators and branding.

Mr. Corley mentioned the LDOE had a leadership brainstorming session earlier in the week and discussed ideas on raising funds for possible scholarships and stipends (TOPS, endowment, university scholarships). They also discussed ideas about the possibility of recognizing these students in legislative sessions. He urged members and guests to contact him if they have any ideas for recognizing the class of 2020, who will be graduating in May 2020. Mr. Corley invited those in attendance to ask questions and provide discussions. Some of the points discussed were:

- Micro Credentials;
- STEM fields for this year, primary locations, and ideas to move forward with expanding beyond certain areas;
- Board of Regents (BoR) provided a list to colleges and universities scholarship opportunities for STEM;
- Goals, fields of STEM, and clarity on incentivizing graduates in STEM Pathways;
- Challenges preventing other areas in the state from participating in the STEM program;
- Project Lead the Way participation;

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- Equitability for all schools and cost reduction for equipment and training;
- Dual enrollment task force;
- BoR Master Plan;
- Defining quality credentials.

Mr. Ronnie Morris posed the question for Mr. Corley asking if he could provide a range of actual costs. Mr. Corley indicated there are courses that are approximately \$100 per student enrolled each year. There are others where the cost can be negotiated with the school or school system for a set cost for a course. This might range from approximately \$1,500 to \$2,000 depending on the size of the school and program. On the other hand, if you have 20 students at a cost of \$482 per student. This is almost \$10,000, but should drop after the first initial year. Once the equipment and supplies have been purchased and the initial year of training has taken place, the school should be able to move forward with reduced costs.

Dr. Lafargue told members that Kellie Taylor-White had mentioned proposing a working group. He asked if there were any discussion to have a working group focused on micro credentials and areas of connecting between business industries and schools. Dr. Lafargue asked any volunteers interested in participating in this working group to send him an email with the subject line "Micro Credentials Volunteer".

Senator Hewitt asked if students are required to pay for STEM Pathway classes or are the high schools charged for the program/curriculum. Mr. Corley indicated that in some cases they charge for curriculum and in other cases charges occur on behalf of the partnership with the provider. The charge is directly with the district not the students.

Dr. Frank Neubrandner with the LSU program reported that the biggest problem is human resources (HR). Training is the main cost. It is estimated at \$1,920 for a one-time training, but teachers can receive additional training.

Mr. Frank Kidd asked if undergraduate education programs existed to assist with the problem. He inquired if any such programs could be modified to receive specialized credentials. If so, then the graduating students would already have this specialized training. Dr. Nikos Kiritsis from McNeese State University provided his opinion on the micro credentials. He said many high schools are not ready for this training. It may be best to speak with universities and tie the micro credentials with courses such as math. Dr. Kiritsis also stated he did not believe the \$10,000 is not an incentive for southwest Louisiana. Dr. David Lafargue thanked Nathan Corley for his presentation.

Dr. Lafargue provided Council members with an update on the Regional STEM Center/Director (RSCD) Working Group and informed the council this group had developed a request for proposals (RFP) document. This group was charged with creating such a document to begin the implementation phase towards setting up and organizing a network to communicate throughout the state and collaboratively work together to address STEM related issues. He asked members to refer to their meeting packet to review the RFP draft and the four addendums. These documents were previously sent to everyone for review prior to the meeting. Dr. Lafargue reviewed the main points of the RFP and then asked for comments and feedback.

*After discussions and with there being no other comments, a motion to accept the RFP with revisions to add a community smart objective that aligns with the metrics and also add in the interview process to include a post-secondary representative from the Board of Regents; Michael Gaudet made the motion and Tom Yura seconded, all were in favor and the motion passed.*

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Dr. Lafargue referred members to the PowerPoint slide revealing the National STEM Strategic Plan. He asked members to consider aligning to the goals and pathways identified in the National STEM Strategic Plan. The benefits of alignment would create opportunities moving forward and comparative data from nationwide annual reports. Dr. Lafargue recommended a comparative crosswalk be created to consider aligning to National STEM Strategic Plan. He would create this document and present to the council at the May 20, 2020 quarterly meeting. Dr. Lafargue requested any feedback or questions from members.

Dr. Lafargue discussed the timeframe for releasing the RFP document along with an anticipated RSCD implementation timeframe. The goal is to release the document to the public in March 2020 to allow two and a half months prior to the submission deadline. Implementing three to five RSCDs would be expected in fall of 2020 while the remaining would occur in the spring of 2021.

## **STEM Showcase**

Mr. Josué De Paz, Manager, Community Partnerships & Outreach with the Girls Who Code Clubs was introduced. He provided an overview of his organization. All programs are offered to all genders. They have after school programs for grades 3-12. They provide support, mini grants, and online training and they are wanting to expand in Louisiana. Mr. De Paz asked that those interested email Mr. De Paz at [josue.depaz@girlswhocode.com](mailto:josue.depaz@girlswhocode.com) for additional information. Mr. DePaz and Dr. Lafargue are to get together between now and May 20<sup>th</sup> to get documentation of what the requirements are for partnering, present it at the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, and, if everyone is in favor, we could officially partner with Girls Who Code Clubs.

## **Other Business**

Dr. Lafargue mentioned the upcoming LaSTEM Quarterly meeting is Wednesday, May 20, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. He said there will be many things taking place over the next few months and we are looking forward to what will take place throughout this year. Dr. Lafargue thanked everyone for their feedback and help over the past few months. He stated there will be a lot of great things happening for Louisiana throughout this year.

Dr. Lafargue asked for further comments from council members and guests. *With there being no other comments or business, a motion was made by Kellie Taylor-White to adjourn and seconded by Crystal Gordan. With all in agreement the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.*