

**Minutes of STEM Partnership Board meeting**

**3.27.14**

Meeting convened at 12.10 p.m.

Attendees: Paul Agosta; Joe Asiala; Patty Cantu; Christy Cloud-Webb; Michael Gallagher; Heather Gallegos; Gary Gilger; Alan Lecz; Brandon Lucas; Greg marks; Val Masuga; Victor Naidu; Derhun Sanders; Megan Schrauben; Jenny Schanker; Mary Sutton; Michael Tanoff; Vass Theodoracatos; Robert Warrington

Apologies: Patty Farrell-Cole; Jodie Ledford

Chair welcomed members. There was no public comment.

The minutes of the February meeting were approved (Megan/Joe).

Committee reports:

* Executive Committee—no report
* Strategic Direction Committee—Paul presented the goal and strategy documents as they now stand with the addition of one strategy from last time. This new addition (on career pathways) was discussed and explained, together with the proposed assignment of responsibilities. Paul shared a list of 8 items that are proposed by the committee as being the most important to be worked on in 2014. There was no priority within the list of 8 items as they were all deemed to be equally important.

Megan asked if metrics and expected outcomes would be included. Paul explained that this was one of the next steps to be discussed by the committee and proposed to the Board. There was agreement that a communication plan is essential if we are to get buy-in from the field. It was proposed that a webinar/town hall meeting could be held in April to get input from the hubs and to facilitate communication between the hubs, as well as determining what the hubs can take responsibility for to contribute to the plan.

Greg brought to the attention of the Board results from a planning meeting of the Bay hub that he had attended that week. Joe and Mary had also attended the meeting. Greg stated that he believed that the Board needs to provide an overall context giving the hubs a clear, consistent framework to work within but with flexibility. He reported that there had been discussion about the need for at least a part-time administrative person in each hub and whether the five hub structure is still relevant given the state’s overall move to ten prosperity regions. Greg mentioned that there was also consideration of having funding to do what is necessary. Mike Gallagher stated that the St Clair hub needs funding to support its own strategic plan which requires sustainable funding, and Al agreed, adding that there needs to be more alignment of the hubs with the Workforce Development Agencies. Mike Gallagher said that aligning with the prosperity regions makes sense in terms of the variety of economies within each hub. Joe pointed out that this is a critical time (during the collective impact process) for the Board to be having these sorts of discussions, and Paul asked, in light of the fact that good work is being done in each hub, how can we quickly categorize this work under more general strategies and how can the Board ensure that all stakeholders are working together. Vass commented that what we need eventually is a scorecard of activities and results. He also mentioned that alignment with the ten regions would assist with funding and was implied by our strategic statements but that we must be careful to maintain our identity. Vass stated that the ED needs help to achieve much of what has been proposed. Do the hubs understand the goals/strategies and are they prepared to help and support the Board?

Heather reiterated that we are a partnership first and foremost but that does not ensure that everyone in the partnership owns the goals. The Board and the Strategic Direction committee/Board should be reaching out to the hubs to secure buy-in for the strategies. Mary stated that the Bay hub is looking for alignment and consistency, plus direction on what data will be collected and used. She believes that the hubs just want to be told by the Board what to do and what best practices should be followed. Vass stated that the leadership must be provided by the ED and others while allowing the hubs to develop and devise their own strategies to achieve the goals. Mike Gallagher mentioned that the ED’s name is on the plan only because someone must provide the leadership and communicate the plan. Joe stated that the strategic process must be structured but the Partnership must be seen as the backbone organization, allowing the hubs a certain amount of leeway in terms of operationalizing the goals. Paul mentioned that his “town hall” idea was meant to convey some sort of communication strategy.

Gary suggested that the goals be sent out to the hubs (Heather agreed) and Paul commented that the next step is to get consensus on the strategies within the hubs. Mike Tanoff pointed out that the goals have already been approved and in line with what the hubs want to do. He stated that he thinks that the hubs and the Board are already on the same page so the issue now is asking volunteers in the field to devote time and energy to working on them. There are no fundamental differences or difficulties in terms of the goals.

Greg suggested that a conference call between the EC or Board and hub representatives might be a good idea to clarify the goals. The Bay hub team had spent a lot of time interpreting the actual words rather than looking at the bigger picture.

Several comments came from Board members and are summarized below:-

Val Masuga—there has been no meeting in the UP for a year due to lack of funds

ED—monthly phone conferences have been scheduled (second Friday of every month) that will allow for discussion of grants, strategic direction and other issues

Mike Gallagher—whatever is done it must be a working session

Greg—finding a way to get people working is crucial

Vass—having a communication plan is vital to foster more two-way communication. Several methods should be used to communicate the plan so that all parties see what’s in it for them.

Greg—Mike is correct in having something concrete for hubs to do. General discussions alone without specifics about what we have done so far and what each hub sees as the problems it faces will not do. A video presentation is premature until the Board is a more coherent group.

Paul—wants some “marching orders” from Board. Can we decide on a couple of ways that the goals can be actualized and used as a basis for a “town hall” meeting or gathering of our partners?

Greg—is there an upcoming opportunity for us to use as a way of clarifying and communicating our plans?

ED—suggested that the April 15 meeting is an opportunity for us to show that we can work with other partners. We missed the boat because we were not involved in developing prosperity plans in the regions several months ago.

Vass—action item is for Greg to identify a tangible event for us to use as a mechanism for us to get our message out.

Joe—there is a budget cycle in agencies and industry that we should be a part of going forward.

We need to get ahead of the budget cycle with our strategic plan and direction

Christy—suggested that we must look beyond the MEDC for funding

ED—we need a clear plan before we go after federal or state grants and we have made a good start.

Paul—the strategic plan may be put out on the google drive.

A meeting of the Strategic Direction committee will be scheduled in the next week.

Further committee reports were delayed to allow for a guest presentation.

Karl Klimek of the Square One Education Network was the guest speaker. He gave a general overview of the work of the Network and then discussed the World ITS Congress in Detroit in the fall. Karl’s presentation was enthusiastically received and resulted in considerable discussion.

Karl also reminded the Board that it had sponsored a Square One event last year that had had to be postponed. He proposed that the $500 could be returned to the Board or it could be used to support a team of girls in a robotics competition. No formal vote was taken but there was general support for helping the robotics team. A decision will be made later.

After a short break, the Board resumed its agenda.

* Finance Committee—Joe reported on progress in the grants process. The MEDC grants will be discussed at a meeting in Lansing April 15. The Partnership grants process was updated. The ED reported on the kick-off at the MSTA conference on March 7 and then explained the current status of approval of RFPs—two hubs have their documents approved and on the web site. The others are expected soon. Funds will be distributed to hubs by Wayne RESA as soon as the approval process is completed.
* Communication Committee—actions speak louder than words so Greg offered as the “report” the obvious progress made in terms of using the google-docs platform.
* Task Force—Brandon had nothing to add on the grants beyond what had already been discussed.
* Board Development Committee—Megan reminded the Board that it is now time to begin recruiting membership for the Board, as well as for the hub teams. All members whose terms expire in August and who want to continue must submit a résumé and a letter of commitment to the ED who will pass them on to the committee. Megan announced that there are two vacancies on the Board—one in the non-educator category and one in the educator category. The latter vacancy has been caused by her own resignation from the Board, effective immediately. Heather and others thanked Megan for her years of service to the Partnership.

A motion to abolish the 80% attendance policy was proposed by Megan and seconded by Greg. Minor discussion followed and the motion was approved. Megan shared that Christy Cloud-Webb had agreed to assume the position of Acting Chair of the Board development Committee.

* Executive Director’s report was accepted as previously distributed.

Heather reminded everyone that the next meeting will be in May according to the new bimonthly schedule. Because the MVU room is to be remodeled, the next meeting may need to be held in The Armory but it is hoped that the changes at MVU will be completed by May 22.

The meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.