



NORTHWEST STEM ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 9, 2016

Sheldon Middle School, 310-23rd Avenue
Sheldon, IA

Members in Attendance: John Bedward, Kathleen Bottaro, Derek Brower, Dr. Eric Forseth, Linda Gray, Nancy McDowell, Mary Trent, Wade Weber, and Mark Zabawa.

Guests: Jeff Weld - Executive Director of Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council, Larie DeGroot – Sheldon Middle School teacher, Janet Leifeld.

Members Absent: Barbara Den Herder, Cheryl Heronemus, Jody Still Herbod, Sherry McGill.

1. Sheldon Middle School teacher Larie DeGroot led advisory board members on a tour of the Synergistic Lab. The original lab was set up in 1993, with local businesses contributing funds for the purchase of individual learning stations or modules. The current lab contains 25 learning modules on various STEM-related topics such as forensic science, sustainable agriculture, flight technology and CNC manufacturing. Updates to the system (software and hardware) occur every five years with school personnel working together to determine module selection. The cost is currently paid by the school district.

Sheldon's Synergistic Lab is designed to serve students in 7th – 8th grade. Pairs of students work together at each module for 7 days before being assigned another module. For each module, students are design and complete tasks, assess the final product, and research potential career options.

Sheldon Middle School shares use of the Synergistic Lab with teachers and students from private schools in the area, providing busing and covering the cost of expendables.

2. Dr. Jeff Weld, Executive Director of Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council, asked for feedback from advisory board members on the current and future focus of STEM

activities through the Iowa Governor's STEM initiative. Some of the areas discussed included:

- Schools in the Cloud. Best tools and practices to collaborate with industry, across school district lines.
- Professional development – continuous, expanded. How to integrate STEM into curriculum.
- STEM for all – Engage students in alternative learning environments, those with alternative learning styles.
- Develop STEM connection with local communities. Use STEM resources to train students as problem solvers, using skills to improve local communities.
- Expand STEM recognition locally.
- Expand STEM Endorsements.
- Increased funding to expand STEM Festivals.

3. Upcoming Opportunities and Events

- Iowa STEM School + Business Innovation Conference, Des Moines.
Date: June 29, 2016 9am- 4pm
Location: Sheraton West Des Moines Hotel
<http://iowastem.org/school-business-conference>
- Governor's STEM Advisory Council Meeting, Des Moines. Date: June 30, 2016
10am – 2:30pm. Location: Sheraton West Des Moines Hotel
- STEM Day at the Iowa State Fair
Date: Sunday, August 21, 2016
Location: <http://www.iowastatefair.org/visit/directions/>
<http://iowastem.gov/STEM-Day-Fair>

4. The 2016-2017 NW STEM Region budget was reviewed and accepted. A larger portion of the allocation will be ear-marked for area STEM festivals.