

GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
FOR THE JOHN C. DUNHAM STEM PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL
Governing Board Minutes
Tuesday, February 9th, 2021 at 1:00 pm

1. Call to Order

Dr. Craig call the meeting to order at 1:01 pm

2. Roll Call

Present: Dr. Craig, Dr. Hichens, Dr. Talley, Dr. Norrell and Dr. Sherrick

Also Present: Mrs. Carter, Dr. Patel, Joy Engfer, Deb Maue, and Ana Buenrostro

3. Public Comment

3.1 Angela Malloy

I and several parents believe that John C. Dunham STEM school is valuable to our children, our district and future students. If the board would like a more detailed personal examples we parents can provide, however we have multiple questions we would like clarification on so we can understand and help.

1.The board stated they are looking into the original purpose of the school to see if the school is delivering on that purpose. Can you share what you agreed to be the original purpose and where did you find that info from?

2. Once you have agreed on the "original purpose" what specific things will you be reviewing or measuring and can you explain those processes a little so we better understand?

3. How long will this review process take? When do you think you will be done and when would we find out the boards decisions?

4. We are most fearful of the school closing, besides just flat out closing can you explain what other things might happen? Just so we have a full picture that the board is not just leaning toward closing.

3.2 Joe Matuch

3.3 Elizabeth McAlpin

Good afternoon, I am here to share a message from our teaching staff, many of whom are currently working with students and unable to attend the meeting at this time. As the process of reviewing the STEM School's model continues, we teachers are committed to working together with you to ensure that we are achieving the goals set forth for the school. We look forward to collaborating to evaluate our successes and create an even more improved STEM School model. As one of the primary stakeholder groups, we are dedicated to taking an active role in this process, and are ready to begin this important work. Please let us know how we will be collaborating with the group to help share the voices and ideas of students, parents, and staff. We look forward to hearing from Dr. Craig and the Governing Board over the coming weeks on the specifics of how we will be contributing in this process. Thank you!

3.4 Maria Tiongco Ramos

4. Consent Agenda

4.1 Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of January 6th, 2021

4.2 Approval of Executive Meeting Minutes of January 6th, 2021

Dr. Hichens motioned to approved consent agenda items 4.1 and 4.2 as presented and Dr. Talley seconded.

Ayes: (5)

Nays: (0)

5. Information/Presentation/Discussion

5.1 STEM Partnership Leadership

Dr. Craig started the conversation by thanking all the public for their comments. He asked them to send them in writing. He started the discussion mentioning that Mrs. Carter resignation, this event incited a conversation among the Board that led to creating subcommittees to address the goals of the school.

The Board wants to have further conversations regarding the transition of the knowledge learned at STEM back into the districts. This includes talking about the leadership at the school and what that will look like next year.

Dr. Sherrick asked clarification whether this position should be sourced internally or externally, mentioning that the last time this position was fill, both sources were used. Dr. Sherrick shared that the STEM school is an unusual model and that it is a collaboration with many stakeholders. She added that the first time a director was appointed it was an emergency.

Dr. Hichens shared that, according to the bylaws the Director should be an Aurora University employee, but that it could be fulfilled by the districts if the Board wishes.

Dr. Craig added that they will have to discuss the process and questions arose if there is the need of both positions; the Director and the Teacher Leader.

Dr. Talley added that they will have to look into the roles and responsibilities of both and decide if they can be combined or not.

Dr. Norrell believes that the Board should not bring someone new to the position until they have agreed on a framework, not until the Board knows what it is the Board wants to do.

The board agreed that they will need feedback from Mrs. Carter, Dr. Patel, and the Teacher Leader. They also agreed that they will need to think about the framework and the timeline.

Dr. Sherrick reminded the Board that it has been a big risk for Aurora University to bring children into the campus. She shared that the they have make it this far without an issue, and that this has been possible thanks to the work from Aurora University and Mrs. Carter. She asserted that it is not easy work since all four districts have different policies. She also mentioned that Aurora University has chosen to take tuition from undergraduates and spend it on STEM students.

Dr. Sherrick believes the position of the Director requires a special staff member that it is able to run a complicated program. The efficiency of the school comes from Aurora University's commitment to quality and that is why the school needs both; the Director and the Teacher Leader.

Dr. Craig echoed that the position of Director is a unique and challenging role. He also said that the Board agreed that Mrs. Carter has done a great job navigating the intricacies of the school model.

Dr. Craig asked the Board how they wanted to proceed, suggesting that there must be a dedicated position of Director. They agreed that they must have someone.

Dr. Talley mentioned that they need to determine how the role is going to fit into the structure, whatever that structure may be.

Dr. Hichens shared that they need to follow the lead of Aurora University on how to fill the position. Dr. Craig asserted that the leadership needs to be intact and that they need to agree on the process; will it be an interim position or a full time Director?

Dr. Norrell added that a decision should be made whether the school needs to have that leadership present every day.

A clarification was made by Dr. Patel that the school has always have a Teacher Leader and that the last and current Teacher Leader had been sourced internally. The Board suggested that they could structure a position of liaison with a lighter role since the Board will be active in the coming year while they are evaluating the school model.

Dr. Craig asked for clarification whether the position is going to be interim or permanent and asked Dr. Patel to help with process and timeline. They are aware that Mrs. Carter position ends at the end of the fiscal year June 30th. They need to work on the position before that.

5.2 STEM Model

The school has three goals since its inception. The Board broke into subcommittees this past months to have a dialogue. They agreed that they have not been meeting the goal of sharing the expertise learned at STEM back into the districts. They also agreed that they have not been doing the rotation of teachers back into their respective districts.

Dr. Craig mentioned that Mrs. Carter's resignation gave the Board the pause to think about the goals and whether they are meeting them. They agreed that it has been a challenge and that they have not been as intentional as they should have. This is why they are looking at the model and questioning how we can serve/meet this goal better?

Dr. Talley thinks that we should be building capacity for the people, utilizing professional development and using the knowledge while learning it.

Dr. Sherrick asserted that she believes that the STEM school has fulfilled this goals, reminding the Board that at the time the school was built, STEM was not a priority in the nation. She believes that the school has impacted the districts, but that it has not been the impact imagined.

Dr. Hichens clarified that there is no question the program has been successful for teachers and students, but only for those students and teachers in the program. She added the what they are trying to accomplish is to expand the model, since it is not currently going back into the districts. Dr. Patel asserted that this is the piece that is missing; the dissemination back to the districts.

The Board suggested that they need to be more systematic about teacher rotation, shadowing, etc. They also agreed that the original framework did not allow for this expansion. However, Dr. Patel mentioned that more funding may be needed to accomplish this.

Dr. Sherrick believes that the STEM model is cumbersome. She stated that there is nothing like this model, having four school districts, a private university, and profit and non profit partners. She shared that this is a very labor intensive model. She asserted that it has been challenging to keep things moving forward. The model looked good on paper, but it was overwhelming to set everything in motion and difficult for all entities to keep moving forward.

She said that the Board needs to ask hard questions like: "Can this be done with so many entities?"

Dr. Craig insisted that we should look at the model in its totality, and asked who should be at the table in the upcoming conversations. Dr. Talley suggested a team from each district to have these discussions, not just one person. Dr. Norrell agreed that it needs to be more than the Board and that there should be a plan gather feedback. Dr. Hichens suggested collecting such feedback in a systematic way across the districts. She also mentioned that it will be helpful to collect information from all stakeholders. Dr. Sherrick said the university will be glad to provide support.

Dr. Sherrick sought clarification in the assumption that the STEM school is to continue and that there will be an improvement in how the STEM knowledge is disseminated back into the districts. Dr. Craig answered that they are looking at the model in its totality, and everything is on the table right now.

Dr. Hichens agreed that it is necessary to go back and evaluate the logic model. Dr. Norrell echoed this, adding that it will be helpful to look at the evaluations and original goals to compared them with the original purpose.

Dr. Craig added that it is important to know what are we using to measure success. He added that students are successful in the STEM school, but only those 200 students. They are assuming that the original model can be tweaked. He then wondered: "Does it becomes a completely different model?"

Dr. Sherrick added that at the beginning there was a belief that just being together was going to be transformative for students and teachers. She believes that it has been; however, the question remains if this model is the best way or if there is a better way to do this.

Dr. Craig requested the members of the Board to share with him their teams to start their discussions. He proposed to send some questions and set meeting dates.

Future Meeting Date: May 11th, 2021

6. Adjourn

Dr. Hichens motioned to adjourn the meeting and Dr. Norrell seconded.

Ayes: (5)

Nays: (0)

The meeting was adjourned at 2:07 pm