

STEM Action Center Board Meeting Minutes

August 27, 2025 • 2:00 PM

Zoom Meeting

Members Present:	Jamie Morningstar, Mark Sunday, Rebecca Banner, Rich Nye, Sarah Reale, Kat Potter, Aniza Brown, Chiao-ih Hui, Andrea Ibanez Kuntz, Vance Checketts
Members Absent:	Kennedy Mpungu, Vic Hockett, Donna Law
Staff:	Tami Goetz, Sue Redington, Becca Robison, Lynn Reichert, Julianne Bailey, Allison Spencer, Kellie Yates, Clarence Ames, Jana Alexander, Gina Powell, Torin Agnelli, Shelby Averett, Viena Zeitler
Visitors:	Dr. Kathy Einhorn

I. Welcome and Related Business

- a. Welcome from Vance Checketts, STEM AC Board Chairperson
- b. Approve meeting minutes
Minutes from the June meeting were held for approval until the October meeting so the Board could focus solely on the strategic planning presentation and discussion.
- c. Introduce Dr. Kathy Einhorn
Tami Goetz introduced Dr. Kathy Einhorn, the strategic plan facilitator that STEM Action Center is using. Dr. Einhorn updated the Board on the process being used, including outlining the data gathering process, which includes qualitative data through one-on-one interviews with board members and focus groups with industry members, and out-of-school STEM contacts which should wrap up by mid-September. Future focus groups will include K-12 administrators, educators, superintendents, and higher education professionals and should be complete by mid-October. A community survey will also be conducted with a final synthesis of information by the end of November. The collected data will be summarized and analyzed to identify trends and patterns, interesting call out ideas, and areas of consensus. The process also includes looking at quantitative data from the annual report to form the basis for a SWOT analysis, leading to the development of action steps, goals, and strategies, with a potential revisit of the vision and mission.
- d. Review timeline and status of strategic plan
Tami Goetz further elaborated on the next steps, which will involve staff reviewing the synthesized information and conducting a SWOT-like analysis to identify and prioritize goals, and then backing in tasks with metrics. Existing logic models for programs will be updated. The final output will be a strategy document with an implementation and monitoring plan to track metrics and revisit the plan regularly that should be ready by the end of February.
- e. Discuss common themes, interesting call outs
Tami Goetz identified three key areas from the initial interviews and focus groups:

Common Themes:

- *Industry and Career Connections:* A strong emphasis on increasing attention and activity in this area, with the idea of an industry liaison being brought up. The need to align with existing initiatives and build sustainable partnerships was also highlighted.
- *Communication:* This was the most consistent theme across all groups. It encompasses general proactive communication to all stakeholders, making teachers and administrators aware of resources, and better communication with parents and caregivers. There's a perceived gap in telling success stories and sharing outcomes, as well as communicating the "why" of the STEM Action Center and its value.

Provocative Call-outs/Interesting Thoughts:

- *Innovation:* Many felt the STEM Action Center and its programs were innovative, but questioned if this innovation was reaching the classroom to support educators. The definition of innovation was also discussed, with mention of an internal "innovation audit."
- *Branding Campaign:* A suggestion for a branding campaign for the STEM Action Center in general, and specifically around "maker learning" to excite students about immersive STEM experiences.

Program Gaps: While Tami Goetz initially thought the next 5 years would focus more on scaling and sustainability of existing programs rather than finding new ones, AI and science were specifically called out as programming gaps that might require more attention. Mark Sunday argues that AI needs to be embedded into every aspect of education, transforming both what and how students are taught, rather than being treated as a separate gap. Chiao-hui Hui adds that teaching critical thinking skills is crucial given the prevalence of AI.

- f. Next steps
 - *End of November:* Completion of remaining education focus groups and community survey results, followed by final synthesis of information.
 - *Mid-December:* Staff retreat completed. The goal is to accomplish significant work during this retreat, with pre-work being done to maximize efficiency. Board members are invited to participate.
 - *End of February:* Final document and implementation/monitoring plan in place, potentially available for the legislative session if needed.

II. WRAP UP

Vance Checketts

- a. *Canyon School District Makerspace:* Becca Robison announces the creation of a new community makerspace in the eBay building within Canyon School District. This space will be similar in size to the existing South Salt Lake makerspace and will involve close collaboration with the school's engineering lab, including joint use of equipment like mills and woodshop tools. A key aspect could be the creation of near-peer mentorship opportunities, pairing high school engineering students with middle and elementary school students. Programming for the space will be designed working with a group of maker learning experts over the next 1-1.5 years.
- b. *FIRST Robotics Program Development:* The STEM Action Center was recommended to take on the role of Program Development Organization (PDO) by previous PDOs. Beehive Science and Technology Academy has stepped up to become the PDO for FIRST LEGO League, and the STEM Action Center is in the process of becoming the PDO for FIRST Tech Challenge. This ensures the continuation of these robotics programs for students. There's also discussion about exploring VEX robotics and seeking external support for a part-time person to help with FTC.

III. Meeting Adjourned at 2:51pm.

As there was no further business, Vance Checketts adjourned the meeting at 2:51PM. The next full Board meeting will be on October 16, 2025, location to be determined.