

STEM INVESTMENT COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

September 29, 2025 - 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

ODE - PSB - Room 251 A/B - 255 Capitol St NE, Salem; [Zoom](#) available for virtual attendees

Standing Business, 1:35 PM

Chair KS Venkatraman

Preliminary, Organizational Business: Roll Call, Approval of Minutes

Overview of agenda and welcoming remarks. Rita Hansen motions to approve previous minutes, Bryan Fix seconds. Motion passes.

Public Comment

Stephanie Salomone: Dr Salomone with Portland Metro STEM partnership expresses concern over Hubs due to delay in ODE funding disbursements. They are risking personnel losses and Hub programming, and past tools for Hub funding are no longer allowed or available. Additionally they are dealing with sweeping budget cuts and need to manage work progress.

Q&A

Rita Hansen: Thank you. Do you know details of impact on which hubs?

SS: Unsure outside of Portland, but Kristen Harrison can provide more information.

Kristen: complicated and lack of timeline is difficult.

Adrienne Pierce: Gov. Kotek provided a letter to field several weeks ago regarding the deficit. The Chief Finance Office is formulating how the deficit will be reconciled and we have not received an update or timeline- but hopefully will within a few weeks.

SS: For context, this money was expected July 1.

RH: Maybe Venkat and I can confer offline about the impact.

Alignment and Partnerships

Accountability Act SB 141

Dan Farley of RADAR presents on the Accountability Act and 8th grade math proficiency specifically, and state summative tests.

Identifying metrics/ similar groups across districts to study and replicate successes, but unsure where performance growth targets will land.

New accountability system customized by type. History of 'similar districts.

[State test results data](#)

Q&A

RH: How does accountability address parents opting students out of testing?

DF: It can't, other than encourage them not to. It's a separate statute.

Proposal for cluster analysis of size/locale in addition to variables such as demographics. But districts can also realign.

Kristi Lebkowsky: This may be challenging as some schools are several hours from district office.

DF: Imperfect system and will have some judgment calls and revisions.

KV: how does distribution of districts fall?

DF: That was also a concern- are there enough districts for variants. But yes. We still need to go through validation process.

Reviews method of hierarchical cluster analysis

Considering what separates them as well as perceptions of what separates them, i.e. access to resources.

Reviews planned timeline

Q&A

Kristen Harrison: how is well resourced/under resourced defined?

DF: Combination of percentage of students experiencing poverty and proximity of resources.

Difficult to parse out. Distance to closes college/community college regardless of borders.

Performance growth targets planned timeline

AP: For context, STEM work falls under OTLA and we partner with Innovation.

Vendor selection timeline: working with SBE to adopt by January 2026

Interim Quality Criteria Development

There is very little research around the appropriate use of interim assessments.

Reporting requirements can be seen here

Q&A

Jill Hubbard: What happens if districts don't meet growth targets?

DF: Continuum of supports as per ODE Accountability Bill. For example prescribed coaching.

Deb Mumm-Hill: Are the assessments, specifically math, going to be same that we've historically used but more frequently? Or are we doing deeper work with what they can assess?

DF: Interim is what the bill requires; we have a state system that's different from summative. It's possible it will be one of the assessments i.e. iReady, other benchmark assessments. The bill says interim but means benchmark.

Kama Almasi: Is there any evidence that achievement increases with assessments?

DF: I'm not aware of any evidence.

Local Metrics

We don't want to add to reporting burdens with new measures. Also we need 3-5 years of data to set growth trends.

Q&A

KV: Regarding the interim assessments, how do they correlate against national data? Comparing to other states?

DF: The one statewide competitor we have is statewide summative tests. We are asking potential vendors to do that work or share results with us. NAEP frameworks are not aligned with Oregon standards. Performance measures will be similar though.

Who is opting out? Typically not IEP, 504, ELL. So the data is not necessarily a good reflection of what is actually happening.

Proficiency means you are on track to graduate and are college/career ready.

AP: This ties into Stem Education Plan: proficiency levels

2024 Summative Achievement Data

Proficiency scores show that students are able to do grade level work, just not consistently. Scores show an overall decrease in proficiency.

Q&A

KV: Do we have trends over time for these?

DF: Going back to 2014, yes. This will be published Thursday.

STEM Hub Continuous Improvement Process, 2:26 PM

Steve Patty, Dialogues in Action

[Continuous improvement process](#) is required by each Hub, each biennium. This is to improve the quality of Hubs over time.

[Core responsibilities of Hubs](#), based on a collective impact model

This is not intended to be an evaluation of impact or to assess regional needs.

[5 steps to CIP](#): curiosity, reflection, interaction, action, communication.

Commendations: strong community partnerships, action for equity, relevant professional development, inclusive community engagement, responsive programming, collaborative learning communities.

Opportunities for improvement: data collection and impact evaluation, improved public communication and visibility strategies, staff diversity and cultural representation, limited staff capacity, diversified funding and sustainability planning, succession planning and knowledge transfer. But recognition of obstacles like funding.

Recommendations: Develop infrastructure for capacity, strategies and alignment of strategic priorities with operations, communication and partnership enhancement, collaboration and learning systems, data systems and impact measurement.

Q&A

RH: These recommendations should be incorporated/addressed in the 2026-2030 STEM Education Plan as well.

Bryan Fix: Are there some elevated examples you can speak into?

SP: In the longer report there are examples and we will share it. Also tomorrow the Hubs are meetings around this to share best practices.

Break, 2:52

STEAM Tool Kit Update, 2:58

Julie Cucuel, CGSH & Kama Almasi, OCST

ODE has been working on a toolkit with emphasis on STEAM/STEM integration (emphasis on STEAM to include Arts). Hubs have been involved with this work.

Start with a grounding activity reflecting on what a STEAM identity is. Common themes and experiences included bias, mentorship, and specific projects.

Beth Blumenstein presents STEAM Pedagogy that explores what STEM/STEAM actually means, based on teacher interviews.

Also known as convergence or [transdisciplinary education](#).

Shannon Johnson presents [STEM Toolkit 'jigsaw' activity](#) to explore different STEAM education approaches. Small group breakouts to discuss different approaches with guiding questions

KA: Leads summary of group discussions on STEAM identity.

Group 1:

Heidi Sipe- Importance of connections and mentors, and ability to see different career paths. And the access and opportunity to these. These can be easier to obtain through secondary level mentorship.

Group 2:

Antonio Jackson- We discussed the importance of early wins to build confidence and learning to ask questions.

Fidel Ferrer- Curiosity is important. In our programs, all these approaches are our targets at some point i.e. first weeks are inquiry based, followed by career path. We build on confidence and STEAM identity.

Group 3:

KL- There is lots of focus on secondary level and industry partnerships; but there have been recent cuts to early learning programs lately like Starbase. I realized how influential this had been to the students' early belief in themselves based on their letters of support for Starbase.

AP: Coming to that common connection point and relevance of work based opportunities is why we're here.

Chris Hesselbein: They all relate to experiential, hands-on learning.

2026-2030 STEM Education Plan, 3:41 PM

KS Venkatraman speaks on [Council Priorities](#) identified by STEM Education Plan Revision Workgroup. He also notes the connection between OES employability skills and STEM program.

Priorities for the next Plan include a condensed strategic plan highlighting the vision, goals, and assessment metrics. Establishing a baseline of metrics. Reporting on metrics periodically via a STEM IC website dashboard.

Workgroup has created a [draft definition of STEM/STEAM](#) based on ODE, Workgroup and HECC definitions: STEM is the pursuit of apple curiosity- igniting creativity, wonder, innovation, and lifelong learning- while connecting education to careers, fostering workforce development, and empowering people to invent, discover, and fulfill STEM careers for a better future. STEM/STEAM is everywhere.

Shauna Theiss speaks on HECC's CTE and Workforce-oriented approach to STEM and the new definition.

Q&A

RH: Looking at this chart- what are employment numbers?

ST: Both anticipated and current numbers from QualityInfo. I can provide the full report if you're interested.

DMH: You can also pull numbers based on region, career, and how many training programs there are in an area with some software- some Hubs have access to this.

RH: How is the data parsed out?

ST: We haven't done the next step of seeing what training is available at community colleges and if they can meet demand- that's the next step. But we do already know that some areas are exploding like health services.

RH: It seems like at a high level, our Plan needs to meet the needs of these anticipated growth areas. We should incorporate this data into planning.

BF: Thanks for including that in the definition- I have stepped in with community colleges to build connections to industry, but has been challenging at K12 level. Our CTE concentrators have significant attendance/ graduation rate differences. The earlier we can connect students to their 'why' the better.

FF: I've been looking at employable skills for a long time and there are lots of soft skills required. We've been collaborating with PMSP to see how we can have more impact. A review of common majors focuses on student belief, educator belief, knowledge domain, skill domain: Student belief is at the top and ties into things like resiliency, autonomy.

MH: There's an opportunity to write a P20 definition of career readiness in Oregon. Could be something for the Council to work on or be aware of, since Oregon STEM does not have the capacity to do it.

Kyle Ritchey Knoll: In K12 there are curious learners, but foundational skills are really critical. We have to figure out how to do both. Often the math skills are a barrier for students to continue in STEM so we need to ensure they are prepared in it as a foundation.

KV: In K12 kids brains can absorb so much- can't miss the opportunity in these skills.

DMH: Yes, especially before 6th/7th grade.

AP: How do you connect it to relevancy, to identity and confidence? But the reality is that we've only put \$8 million into math and none into science over the last decade.

[Timeline](#) of revision process aiming at release in early 2026.

Most recently they've held listening sessions and workgroup sessions; landing on a draft purpose right now.

Q&A

DMH: The only thing I'd add is STEM Identity.

AP: Agreed- How do we break down goals, including the ones included in statute, connect to the digital age, and to STEM identity?

FF: How do we measure the first two goals?

AP: We've been digging into that and it probably comes with strategies- how to measure strategies of goals. For example, goal 4 could potentially use Hubs' PEAR survey, or district SEED survey.

Focused feedback rounds: Identifying strategies aligned with the goals. Small group activity examines different sections of goals for feedback.

Group 1: Gap analysis and assessment- concern over a siloed system. Also there is an issue with public perception of our education as related to scores reporting. Another big theme is a need for the representation of the lack of elementary science access.

Group 2: Accountability and who is responsible for what area; proportional accountability. We have to acknowledge who actually controls what. And there's a need for multiple ways of measurement. Lastly, a need to remember that schools have a multitude of plans and guidelines they have to follow.

Group 3: Who is opting out? Why? How can we appeal to them to take assessments in terms of how it benefits everyone? Also, complementary metrics could be tied to goals such as employment data. Belief connects to knowledge and assessment connects to skills and employment.

ODE will send a followup survey that summarizes this and the next layer of this work.

Next Meeting Dates 4:34

2025 STEM IC Q4: 12/3/225 12:30 - 4pm (virtual)

2026 STEM IC Dates:

Q1: 2/27/26 12:30PM -4:00PM (hybrid)

Q2: 5/15/26 9:30AM - 1:00PM (virtual)

Q3/Q4 TBD in Winter 2026

Adjourn 4:35