

Steamboat Springs Education Fund Board
April 17, 2024
5:30PM
Trout Creek Room – Courthouse Annex

Education Fund Board Directors present included: Adam Alspach, Mary Johnston, Mandy Maass, Amanda Koziar, Kipp Rillos, Jeff Steck, and Kandise Gilbertson. Jon Wade, Jim Beers, Lauren Hughes, and Lisa Ruff were absent. Also in attendance were Linda Thomas (SSEF accountant); Celine Wicks and Stephanie Juneau (SSSD); Ed Anderson (HSD); Ciara Bartholomew (SRSD); Dervla Lacy (SM); Maggie Bruski (NWBOCES); Kim Schultz (Steamboat Reading); Daniele Skov; and several members of the public. Sarah Katherman prepared the minutes.

- **Call to Order:**

Adam Alspach called the meeting of the Steamboat Springs Education Fund Board to order at 5:30 PM.

- **Public and Advisory Board Comment**

Kim Schulz of Steamboat Reading thanked the SSEF board for its past funding and stated that several teachers were here to offer support for the program. A special education teacher from Soroco, a teacher from SPE, a special education teacher from the SSMS, and a literary interventionist with SSSD all spoke in support of Steamboat Reading and the valuable tutoring it provides.

Hearing no further comment, Adam closed public comment.

- **Meeting Minutes – March 13, 2024:**

MOTION

Mary moved to approve the EFB meeting minutes cited above, as amended. Kipp seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- **Financial Report**

Linda reviewed the financial report, as included in the meeting materials. She noted that the April deposits had been received and are included in the financial report. She said that the current cash on hand is \$2.85M and that outstanding liabilities are \$3.23M. She said that the gap was not a concern because the balance would be covered by the May and June deposits. Linda reviewed the estimated 2024 – 2025 budget and noted that the EFB had approved a preliminary budget for grants and expenses in March of \$6,961,546 and had also approved the cash flow cushion, the administrative budget, the grant writer grants for a balance to allocate to grants of \$6,091,046. Linda noted, however, that an additional \$321,220 was available if the board wanted to amend its preliminary total budget. She reviewed that the board had forecast revenues to be down 6% this year in comparison to last year’s actuals. To date, this fiscal year’s revenues have come in 3.6% over last year’s actuals, or 10.34% over forecast.

- **School District Categorical Grants**

Dervla, representing SM, stated that 100% of the funds allocated to SM would be used to support student-facing staff. She said that a significant portion of the funds would be used to support assistant teachers which are used in all the classrooms and who provide a great deal of social and emotional support, which

is needed in SM's mixed-age classrooms. The remaining funds will be used to support essential teachers in Spanish, performing arts, visual arts, and physical education.

Stephanie, representing SSSD, reviewed the proposed use of SSEF funding on student-facing staff, technology, and curriculum. Referring to the student-facing staff category, she noted that with the reduction in funding this year, the SSEF grant would support one less FTE than it had last year. She said that spending on technology would be fairly consistent with previous years, and that the remaining funds would support 4th and 5th grade English language arts curriculum, K-12 world language curriculum, and K-12 PE curriculum.

Ed, representing HSD, reviewed the proposed use of SSEF funding. He noted that in comparison with last year, more of the funding would be devoted to ELL education. He added that a higher percentage of the funding would be used on student-facing staff than in recent years.

Ciara, representing Soroco, reviewed the proposed spending of SSEF funding and emphasized the importance of the funding for the district's technology needs. She said that like SSSD, the reduction in funding would mean that the student-facing staff supported by the SSEF grant would be reduced compared to last year.

- **Community Group Grants**

Mary provided a synopsis of each grant application prior to its being discussed. She also reviewed the SSEF mission statement and the guidelines for evaluated community group grants that had been agreed upon at last year's summer session. Sarah presented the spreadsheet showing each board member's recommendation for how the money allocated to the community groups should be awarded. She noted that due to a family emergency one board member had not submitted recommendations and another had proposed a much higher allocation to community groups, which would require a reduction in the allocations to school districts, so a total of nine recommendations are included in the mean and the median on the spreadsheet. Where there was general agreement and/or little spread among the recommendations, the group decided to use the median of the recommendations and adjust the final awards following the discussion, if needed. The following summarizes the comments regarding the applications that were discussed in some detail:

Partners in Routt County – Amanda noted that the cost per student reached for this program is very high. Mandy said that there had not been a mentor available at Soroco. Kipp said that in recent years PRC has had a hard time hiring staff, which had resulted in rescissions of grant funds.

Integrated Community – Kipp offered that the number of students reached is not indicative of the significant impact of ICCI programming, which benefits the student population at large.

Steamboat Opera – Mandy noted the success of this program. There was discussion of the reasons behind the large increase in the requested level of funding. It was noted that this programming reaches many students.

Northwest Colorado Health – In response to a question from Jeff, Celine clarified that this program is intentionally invisible to the students and provides support for issues that the schools counselors and social workers are not equipped to deal with.

Steamboat Symphony Orchestra – Jeff offered that this program fills a real gap in the school curriculum at a fairly low cost.

Steamboat Dance Theatre – Amanda reported on the program’s performance at Casey’s Pond. She said that the instruction occurs through the school PE programs.

STARS – There was discussion of the different elements included in the request. Celine confirmed that STARS takes the kids from the schools during PE times to participate in the program. There were diverse opinions expressed regarding the alignment of this programming with the curriculum.

Steamboat Reading – Amanda reiterated a comment made by one of the teachers who had spoken in support of the program: if kids can’t read, they really can’t perform in any other discipline, or in life. There was a discussion of how kids are referred to the program by teachers and how it differs in intensity from the work done by the school intervention staff.

Oak Creek Childcare Center – Mary expressed concern with the lack of direct connection to the schools or alignment with the school curriculum. Others agreed. Mandy said that her kids participate in this program. She confirmed that it is an afterschool program.

Routt County Riders – Several board members stated that while they thought this program was very beneficial, they did not see a strong alignment with the SSEF mission statement or with academic achievement. Given the limited funds, there was consensus not to fund this program.

Piknik Theatre – There was general consensus that this request did not have a strong connection to the school curriculum or programming.

Stand for Children – Kandise expressed concern that the program would only reach SSSD students. Mandy said that the additional burden the program would put on teachers was problematic for her. Adam added that the requested grant funding would primarily support organizational personnel on the front range rather than on-site providers.

NW Colorado BOCES – Mary stated that she would like to support at least one PT interventionist. She expressed concern that the lack of BOCES services was unequal across the districts. Mandy confirmed the importance of the services provided. Jeff suggested that this program should be part of the districts’ allocations. There was a discussion of the impact of the lack of special services at HSD and Soroco. Adam said that he was okay with providing some support this year but suggested that how future funding for NWBOCES should be processed would be a good topic for the summer work sessions.

MOTION

*Kandise moved to approve the following community group awards for the 2024 – 2025 school year. Mary seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.***

Yampatika	\$28,000
Rocky Mountain Youth Corps	\$45,000
Partners in Routt County	\$43,000
Integrated Community	\$20,000
Junior Achievement	\$7,000
Opera Steamboat	\$10,000
Northwest Colorado Health	\$25,000
Steamboat Symphony Orchestra	\$12,000

Steamboat Dance Theater	\$3,000
STARS	\$15,000
Steamboat Reading	\$15,000
Strings Music Festival	\$10,000
NW Colorado BOCES	\$19,169
Total Community Groups	\$252,169

- **Consideration of Amending Total Budget**

Adam proposed that the board increase the preliminary budget approved in March by the \$321,220 discussed earlier, with the additional funds to be added in full to the school district allocation. He cited the reduction in student-facing staff across the districts. He noted that a supplemental budget amendment of this sort had been done in the past, with the additional funds divided among the districts according to the same percentages used in the allocation model. The resulting amended total budget would be \$7,282,766. Following a discussion of whether the percentages allotted to the smaller districts should be increased to account for the loss of BOCES funding, Mary suggested that the percentages should not be changed without a larger discussion and agreement by the Board. There was consensus to stick with the previously approved percentages, which when calculated without the allocation to community groups is as follows:

SSSD 86%
 SRSD 4.3%
 SM 4.3%
 HSD 5.4%

MOTION

*Mary proposed to amend the total SSEF budget for 2024 – 2025 to \$7,282,766. Kipp seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.***

MOTION

*Kandise proposed to allocate the additional \$321,220 to the school district grant budget, with the funds to be divided among the districts as stated above. Amanda seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.***

Sarah said she would send a supplemental categorial application to each district. She said that the grant award letters would reflect the total awards and that the accountability reports completed in the fall of 2025 should provide the details regarding how the funds listed on both the original application and the supplemental application were spent.

- **Consideration of board candidates**

Sarah noted that she had sent emails to all six candidates who had applied for the two available positions and had invited them all to attend this meeting for interviews. Only a few applicants had responded. One of the candidates (Chris Elliott) had withdrawn his application. The board interviewed Danielle Skov (live) and Lisa Lorenz (via Zoom).

Following discussion, the board decided to extend board membership offers to both Danielle and Lisa. Sarah said that she will contact the other applicants in the event that additional positions open up. She will

also invite Danielle and Lisa to attend the summer work sessions. They will be officially voted on at the September meeting.

- **May meeting**

It was decided that there was no need for a meeting in May.

- **Agenda for Summer Sessions**

- Review SSEF Policies & Procedures
- Allocation Model
- Consider evaluation process for community group applications
- Consider standardized documentation requirements from community groups for reimbursements

The EFB meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.