

May 13, 2021

MINUTES OF THE
UTAH STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Thursday, May 13, 2021
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APPROVED

Members Present:

Chair DeLaina Tonks (*refrains from voting, unless otherwise noted)
Vice Chair Bryan Bowles
Member Cynthia Phillips
Member Krystle Bassett
Member Michelle Smith
Member Erik Olsen
Member Stephanie Speicher

Staff Present:

Jennifer Lambert
William Evans
Assistant Attorney General David Jones
Amber Hellstrom
Stewart Okobia
Greg Connell
Marie Steffensen
James Madsen
Jenna Magnetti
Robert Kohutek
Smriti Dhakal
Andrew Vardas-Doane
Liz Bunker

Others Present:

Matt Hymas (USBE), Jonathan Hafen (Tuacahn), Tim Huber (Legacy Preparatory Academy, LPA), Karen Holman (LPA), Drew Williams (Utah Arts Academy, UAA), Kent Brown, Mathew Hafen (Tuacahn, THS), Vicky Wilson (UAA), Chris Helvey (FPA), Lynne Herring (FPA), Anthony Sudweeks (WSA), Cary McConnell (FPA), Brandon Winn (FPA). Adam Garlach (WSA).

Call to Order

Chair Tonks called the meeting to order at 9:06 AM.

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Board Chair Report

Chair Tonks noted that this an electronic meeting due to Covid and thanked staff, participants, and board members.

Chair Tonks reported that:

- Mountain Heights Academy's Science Department Team Lead Amy Pace for receiving the Governor's Office of Energy Development Award
- Beehive student Boden is elected as the President of the National Council for Hope Squad
- U.S. News and World Report released their Best High Schools of 2021 Rankings. Beehive, InTech, Karl G. Maeser, NUAMES, APA Draper, AMES, and Itineris placed in the top 10 of all Utah high schools! Beehive (224) and InTech (388) ranked in the top 500 high schools in the nation and Karl G Maeser barely missed that by ranking 506.
- Kim Anderson of Providence Hall was awarded as the May 2021 Employee of the Month of SCSB Authorized Schools

Member Phillips shared a thought about school reform from former New York school chancellor Joel Klein concerning lack of results because those in power are not impacted by poverty and are comfortable to serve the adult stakeholders instead of the kids, then noted hesitancy among Utah leaders to embrace innovation because it denotes change, the importance of well-handled conflict, technology for assessment and accessibility, powerful external force and allowances to adapt to external forces, hardships during the pandemic and the unprecedented opportunities it has offered, maximizing learning platforms, competency based learning, accessibility for remote/in-learners, need to allow waivers for innovation to thrive, not let schools be playground for politics, and only the student matters.

Executive Director Report

Executive Director Lambert discussed end of mask mandates in state buildings on May 31st and staff returning thereafter, and Brian Carpenter trainings.

Public Comment

No public comment was made.

Consent Calendar

A) April 15, 2021 Minutes, B) Monthly Financial Report, C) Amendment to Exhibit A: Jefferson Academy, D) Start-Up and Implementation Grand Award SY2022, E) Revolving Loan Committee FY2022 Loan Recommendations

Motion

Member Smith moved, and Member Speicher moved “to adopt the Consent Calendar.” The motion carried unanimously.

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School Spotlight: Legacy Preparatory Academy

Mr. William Evans presented, discussing testing data, increased proficiency in reading scores, low-income students saw 50% increase, dramatic increases for ELL students, teaching through art, and adjusting spaces because of pandemic.

Representatives of LPA were questioned by board members and discussed professional development with Jennifer Throndsen which helped them achieve benchmarks, literacy proficiency and statewide recognition, progress monitoring, and appreciation for teachers.

Tuacahn High School for the Performing Arts

Request to Reassign Charter to Utah Arts Academy

Chair Tonks provided context of requested reassignment, Tuacahn High School (THS) splitting from Tuacahn Arts Academy (TCA) and Utah Arts Academy (UAA) working with SCSB staff.

Mr. Andrew Vardas-Doane presented, discussing establishment of THS, context that led to necessity for transition and transfer of Charter Agreement, UAA's application, governance structure and member experience, projected enrollment, budget and finances, facilities and lease agreements, contracts and staffing, finalized agreements for transfer of assets, and how the school would be closed if transfer was not approved.

Chair Jon Hafen (TCA) thanked SCSB members and staff, desire to see Charter Agreement reassignment approved, timeline for merger, and TCA's excitement.

Executive Director Lambert noted that staff supports this transfer.

Representatives of UAA echoed excitement, timeline, and agreements.

AAG David Jones discussed legalities of agreements; SCSB assessing financial viability, governance, and facility; review of UAA and TCA agreement, issues of employment, and distribution of assets and liabilities.

SCSB members discussed legal authority, Exhibit A of UAA, student interest, communication with stakeholders, timing of transfer, closing date, honoring of employee contracts, and facilities.

Motion

Member Phillips moved, Member Olson to approve "Tuacahn High School for the Performing Arts have its charter reassigned to Utah Arts Academy charter school." The motion carried unanimously.

Motion

Member Olson moved, and Member Phillips seconded, "to approve new Charter Agreement of Utah Arts Academy contingent upon closing of their transaction as discussed today." The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion to the Motion

AAG Jones discussed not entering into the Charter Agreement until the closing of transaction.

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FY2022 Budget

Mr. Stewart Okobia presented the FY22 budget, noting that the Budget Committee has reviewed it and recommends it for approval by the full board, and that the final motion from the 2021 Public Education Appropriations subcommittee directs the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to treat the SCSB in a similar fashion to the Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind (USDB) on budgetary matters by providing general oversight in approving an annual budget, but allowing the SCSB to manage day-to-day financial operations and budgeting. SCSB is fiscally sound and has always operated within its budget.

Motion

Vice Chair Bowles moved, and Member Smith seconded, “to approve the FY2022 Budget.” The motion carried unanimously. Member

- Member Bowles—Yes
- Member Phillips—Yes
- Member Smith—Yes
- Member Bassett—Yes
- Member Speicher—Yes
- Member Olson—Yes

Legislative Update

Member Phillips provided history and context and discussed legislation that passed dealing with autonomy of the SCSB so USBE shall treat the SCSB like they do USDB, thus giving SCSB autonomy to manage its budget. A report and analysis from the Direction from the Department of Finance is expected and forthcoming.

SY2022 Meeting Schedule

Executive Director Lambert displayed the proposed SY2022 meeting schedule of:

- August 12th (and August 11th, if needed)
- September 9th
- October 14th
- *November 10th (Wednesday) or November 18th (Thursday)
- December 9th
- January 13th (and January 12th, if needed)
- February 10th
- March 10th
- April 14th
- May 12th
- June 9th

The board chose the November 10th option.

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Motion

Member Smith moved, and Member Speicher seconded, “to approve the SY2022 Meeting Schedule.” The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion to the Motion

Meeting in-person and potential to meet with Zoom as well.

Readiness to Open Report and Discussions

Freedom Preparatory Academy—Washington

Wallace Stegner Academy—West Valley

Ms. Marie Steffensen discussed the Readiness to Open checklist and the different categories it reviews, the SCSB’s role,

Freedom Preparatory Academy (FPA)

Ms. Marie Steffensen discussed history of FPA, mission statement, location, completed and on-track items on checklist, status of items that are not met or on-track: low enrollment and financials.

SCSB members and representatives of FPA discussed demonstrated interest by stakeholders, development in neighboring area of the facility, enrollment driving financial viability, five-year plan, and plan for acquiring qualified teachers.

Motion

Member Phillips moved, and Member Basset seconded, “that the State Charter School Board certify that the FPA Satellite is ready to open in August 2021.” The motion carried unanimously with the following votes:

Discussion to the Motion

Original reasons for approving satellite still stand and moving towards financial viability.

Wallace Stegner Academy (WSA)

Ms. Marie Steffensen discussed history of WSA, mission statement, location, completed and on-track items on checklist.

SCSB members and representatives of WSA discussed how enrollment was achieved during midst of the pandemic, and great growth scores.

Motion

Member Smith moved, and Member Speicher seconded, “that we certify WSA as having made significant progress to meet the certification to open standards.” The motion carried unanimously.

Location of June Board Meeting

Desire to meet at USBE and tasking staff to setup meeting at Weillenmann School of Discovery if USBE is not an option.

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Adjourn

Motion

Vice Chair Bowles moved to adjourn.