

September 10, 2020

MINUTES OF THE
UTAH STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Thursday, September 10, 2020

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APPROVED

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Jennifer Lambert
Assistant Attorney General David Jones
Amber Hellstrom
Stewart Okobia
Greg Connell
Marie Steffensen
James Madsen
Jenna Magnetti
Robert Kohutek

Others Present:

Mike Haynes (USB), Joel Wright, Kami Alvarez, Joy Palmer (Vanguard), Brad Vanguard (Vanguard), Carol Anderson, Rebecca Strait, Tami Pyfer (Governor's Office)

Call to Order

Chair Tonks called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM

Motion

Vice Chair Bowles moved, and Member Phillips seconded, "to switch the Public Comment with the swearing in of the new board member on our agenda." The motion carried unanimously.

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Swearing in of New Board Member

Ms. Tami Pyfer administered the Oath of Office to Ms. Stephanie Speicher who officially becomes the newest member of the State Charter School Board.

Public Comment

Mr. Joel Wright spoke on Utah Charter School Finance Authority (UCSFA) policy and its conflict with the “Review of Facilities Contracts or Financing Agreements for Charter Schools” policy and asked the SCSB to ask the UCSFA to amend or withdraw their policy.

Ms. Kami Alvarez voiced concern about Athenian eAcademy and requested an audience with board members to discuss the issue before any decisions are made.

Board Chair Report

Chair Tonks discussed attending governor’s meeting, educator interim, and AMES being recognized as a 2020 ESEA awardee in category 1.

Executive Director Report

Executive Director Lambert discussed having Satellite process approved by USBE, and the results of the survey from strategic meeting.

Consent Calendar

A) August 13, 2020 Minutes, B) Monthly Financial Report, C) Utah Mountain School Amendment, D) Spectrum Academy Credit Enhancement Certification, E) Utah School Readiness Board Appointment.

Motion

Member Smith moved, and Member Speicher seconded, “to approve the Consent Calendar.” The motion carried with the following votes:

Vice Chair Bowles—Yes

Member Smith—Yes

Member Speicher—Yes

Member Phillips—Yes

Member Bassett—Yes

Member Moss—Yes

Expansion Requests for SY2021

Vanguard Academy

Ms. Marie Steffensen discussed the process for the request, definition of an Expansion, amendment of Board Rule and requirements schools must meet before the SCSB can accept and approve Expansion

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applications, and staff's review of eligibility.

A vide provided by Vanguard Academy was shown.

The extent to which the school is meeting the terms of their Charter Agreement, results of two years of data, consistency and compliance with state law and Board Rule, STEM and opportunities for students with unique learning needs, reasoning for lower percentage of special education students, reasons for low percentage of ELL and minority population, evidenced based instruction required by federal law, adequacy of administrators and staff, compliance with all applicable school legal obligations, financial viability, compliance with fund and program accounting requirements, adequate facilities with appropriate equipment and devices, and student safety issues were discussed.

Motion

Member Moss moved, and Member Smith seconded, "to approve the Expansion request of Vanguard Academy from 450 to 550 students." The motion carried unanimously with the following votes:

Vice Chair Bowles—Yes

Member Smith—Yes

Member Speicher—Yes

Member Phillips—Yes

Member Bassett—Yes

Member Moss—Yes

Probation Status Update and Possible Action

Athenian eAcademy

Mr. Greg Connell introduced terms of Probation, noting that Athenian eAcademy (AeA) completed 15 terms and was unable to meet the remaining three terms due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff believes that due to COVID-19, AeA met all terms they could and should be removed from Probation.

Representatives of AeA were questioned on efforts of remedying issues with board governance, improvements of graduation rate, performance on end-of-year testing, and desire to see additional terms met.

Motion

Member Phillips moved, and Member Moss seconded "that Athenian eAcademy be removed from their current Probationary status." This motion was amended below.

Discussion to Motion

Consistency with every school put on and taken off Probation,

Amendment to the Motion

Vice Chair Bowles moved "to take Athenian eAcademy off Probation with the notion that they will come back with an academic report that will be the same as, or replace, NWEA, when results are available." Member Phillips and Member Moss accepted the amendment, thus the motion because "that Athenian eAcademy be removed from their current Probationary status

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with the notion that they will come back with an academic report that will be the same as, or replace, NWEA, when results are available.” This motion was substituted below.

Discussion to the Amendment

Terminating Probation, despite unmet terms due to their unreachable nature as a result of COVID-19, and the intent to continue to monitor and support the school via a future report from the school was discussed.

Substitute Motion

Member Phillips moved, and Member Moss seconded, “that Athenian eAcademy be removed from its current Probationary status with an understanding that the school will be able to demonstrate to the State Charter school Board, at a future date, the tool and its use in place at its school to gather growth and proficiency data internally.” The motion carried with the following votes:

Member Phillips—Yes

Member Moss—Yes

Vice Chair Bowles—Yes

Member Bassett—Yes

Member Speicher—Yes

Member Smith—Yes

Update on Public Feedback for Amendments to: *Review of Facilities Contracts or Financing Agreements for Charter Schools*

Mr. Stewart Okobia summarized the comments received and noted that the goal is not to add more red-tape, but to make policy more effective and ensure that we are doing what is required by law.

Mr. Okobia noted that the policy will continue to be posted for public comment and any new draft will be posted for thirty days.

SCSB Goals

Vice Chair Bowles presented the Support, Communicate, and Monitor goals and noted that more time is needed for the Innovate goal.

Language changes, outcome vs desires for goals, innovation survey for schools, and sending innovation goal back to Innovations Committee was discussed.

Motion

Vice Chair Bowles moved, and Member Phillips seconded, to “to approve first three goals with changes on the Support goal that I mentioned, and with the direction that the Innovations Committee, hearing the desires of the board, will work on an Innovation goal and bring that back

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to the full board to consider in a future board meeting.” The motion carried unanimously with the following votes:

Vice Chair Bowles—Yes

Member Phillips—Yes

Member Bassett—Yes

Member Moss—Yes

Member Speicher—Yes

Member Smith—Yes

Adjourn

Motion

Vice Chair Bowles moved to adjourn.