

MINUTES OF THE
UTAH STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Thursday, June 8, 2023

USBE Board Rooms and Basement West
250 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84111
www.youtube.com/utahscsb

Members Present:

Chair Bryan Bowles
Vice Chair Cynthia Phillips
Member Krystle Bassett
Member Stephanie Speicher
Member Erik Olson
Member Rabecca Cisneros

Staff Present:

Liz Bunker
Joanne Castillo
Lisa Cooper-Loock
Smriti Dhakal
William Evans
Marie Steffensen

Others Present:

AAG Kevin Olsen
USBE Deputy Superintendent Angie Stallings
Floyd Stensrud, Superintendent, Hawthorn Academy
Joy Leavitt, IB and STEM Coordinator, Hawthorn Academy
Jennifer McKissik, Parent Representative, Hawthorn Academy
Amy Tatton, Board Member, Hawthorn Academy
Meggen Pettit, Board Member, Hawthorn Academy
Brittany Garcia, Curriculum and Assessment Director, Hawthorn Academy
Jeremy Craig, Principal, Hawthorn Academy
Anthony Sudweeks, Co-Founder and Co-Director, Wallace Stegner Academy
Angela Grimmer, Principal, Summit High School
Brad Wilkinson, Business Administrator, Summit High School and Summit Academy
Jon Eborn, Board Chair, Summit High School and Summit Academy

MEETING BEGINS (1:33 PM)

Chair Bowles led the Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

No Public Comment

Board Chair Report (1:36 PM)

Chair Bowles asked the Members to note the printed schedule of Board meetings for FY24 as some of the meetings deviate from the typical meeting day in the month. Chair Bowles acknowledged those responsible for the recent charter school conference and the related award recipients. Director Lambert's absence was excused due to medical reasons.

Consent Calendar (1:40 PM)

Member Cisneros: "I'll make a motion that we approve the Consent Calendar."

Member Olson: "I'll second that."

The motion passes unanimously

Closed Session (1:43 PM)

Chair Bowles stated a need to go into closed session and called for a motion.

Member Bassett: "I move to go into closed session so we can discuss the character and competence of an individual."

Member Olson: "I'll second that."

Roll Call:

Member Speicher: "yes."

Member Olson: "yes."

Vice Chair Phillips: "yes."

Member Bassett: "yes."

Member Cisneros: "yes."

Open Session Resumes (2:53 PM)

Probation Status – Vanguard Academy (2:53 PM)

School Performance Coordinator William Evans described the history of this probation, identified the changes made, and presented slides revealing his findings focusing on the previous 3 months. Chair Bowles mentioned a few possible actions that the Members can take. Member Olson introduced conversation with Dr. Evans regarding whether or not there were any outstanding deficiencies. Dr. Evans addressed Vice Chair Phillips' question regarding Vanguard's revised bylaws. AAG Olsen identified the scope of his involvement since March. Dr. Evans addressed Vice Chair Phillips' question on other possible areas of concern relative to the efforts taken to realign the procurement process with State policy. In answer to Member Olson's question, Dr. Evans recommended to the Board that the school be taken off probation.

*Vice Chair Phillips: "I'd like to move that Vanguard be taken off probation by this Board."
Member Bassett: "I'll second that motion."*

Discussion:

Member Cisneros stated that she would abstain from the vote. Chair Bowles confirmed that a quorum was still present despite Member Cisneros' abstention.

Motion passes unanimously.

Chair Bowles turned remaining agenda items over to Vice Chair Phillips as he needed to leave the meeting (3:07 PM)

Vice Chair Phillips recessed the meeting because members of the Hawthorn community were not in the room.

Meeting in Recess (3:09 PM)

Meeting resumes (3:14 PM)

Amendment Request – Hawthorn Academy: Change in Mission and Focus (3:14 PM)

School Support Coordinator Marie Steffensen presented on the nature of the change request, the context of the change requested by the school, and staff recommendation. Member Olson began conversation with Hawthorn leadership around what the school has done to make sure they have the support of the school community focusing on what actions the school has taken to identify the community support for this action. Member Cisneros expressed appreciation for the variety of levels of leadership represent at the meeting before suggesting to the Members that a new process might be needed to make sure that changes such as these might not be overly-cumbersome for the school. Member Cisneros began discussions about how the move from IB to STEM would change the identity, culture, and uniqueness of the school as a charter school. Member Cisneros continued with a discussion on goal generation that would withstand a change of curricular emphasis. Member Speicher introduced discussion regarding the ubiquity of STEM, the theme of innovation, teacher training, and the accessibility parents have about current and future curricular emphases through the school's website.

Member Cisneros: "I do want to make a motion that e approve Hawthorn Academy's request to change its model from IB to STEM with the condition that, within an appropriate amount of time, they receive a STEM designation as a STEM school."

Vice Chair Phillips clarified the origination of that designation.

Member Speicher: "I'll second that and support that."

Discussion:

Member Olson began discussion on the significance of the designation, whether or not the designation was something the school has discussed, and, if so, what timeline was the school

considering. A three-year timeline was introduced into the discussion. Member Speicher voiced her approval of the timeline as indicated on the school’s website, how it fits with current State actions, and how it sets Hawthorn up within the charter school community in Utah.

The Motion passes unanimously.

Amendment Request – Wallace Stegner Academy: Change High School Campus Location

School Performance Coordinator William Evans presented on the history, summary, and staff recommendations on the request made by the school. Co-Founder and Co-Director Sudweeks presented the challenge of purchasing the necessary acreage for the expansion they were previously granted. Member Cisneros began the discussion on clarification of the number of school numbers that would be under the LEA and what grades would be under each school number. Vice Chair Phillips began conversation on whether or not the requested changes to the initial approval were significant enough to need to undergo the satellite/expansion process. Deputy Superintendent Stallings clarified the new process that had been adopted by the USBE as of the end of May, and she began a conversation on new satellites versus small expansions and the timelines associated with respect to the new USBE Rule. AAG Olsen was unable to contribute an opinion as he had not yet reviewed the new rule. Member Cisneros began discussion on whether location or school number would create a process or Rule problem. AAG Olsen expressed his current concerns. Staff contributed charter agreement information and precedence set by Board decisions for other schools.

Member Speicher: “I would like to make a motion to allow Wallace Stegner Academy’s satellite number 2 to be in different locations ... conditional to any legal review.”

Member Olson: “Yes, I’ll second.”

Discussion:

None

Motion passes unanimously.

Transfer of Assignment – Summit High School and Summit Academies

Financial Audit Manager Smriti Dhakal presented on the history and current conditions of the process of the request to merge these two schools. Summit Board Chair Eborn commented on how helpful staff has been throughout the process. Member Olson asked staff if there was any suggested change to the possible motion as presented. AAG Olsen introduced conversation around the language of the assignment and the nature of the charter agreement.

Member Olson: “I move to approve the transfer of assignment of Summit High School to Summit Academy starting July 1, 2023, if both LEAs have completed all the steps needed to occur before the entities merge on July 1, 2023. I also move to approve the new charter agreement for Summit Academy which includes the updated Exhibit A and, among other things, includes the addition of a high school campus beginning the 2023-2024 school year.”

Member Bassett: "I will second that motion."

Discussion:

None

Motion passes unanimously.

Spotlight Schools (5:01 PM)

Karl G. Maeser Academy

Canyon Rim Academy

HighMark Charter School

Thomas Edison

Timpanogos Academy

Academy for Math Engineering & Science (AMES)

Promontory School of Expeditionary Learning

The Center for Creativity Innovation and Discovery

School Performance Coordinator Evans identified the metrics by which the schools in this year's batch of comprehensive reviews were evaluated and differentiated before spotlighting the schools who excelled according to those metrics. Member Speicher expressed thanks for the opportunity to attend graduations and began conversations around the success they got to celebrate in attending them.

Member Olson: "I move to adjourn"

MEETING ENDS (5:06 PM)