



Chair W. Bryan Bowles
Utah State Charter School Board
250 E. 500 S.
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
September 15, 2023

Chair Jim Moss
Utah State Board of Education
250 E. 500 S.
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Dear Members of the Utah State Board of Education,

I hope this letter finds you well. The State Charter School Board (SCSB) respectfully requests a waiver from the timeline for approving and authorizing charter schools as found in the SCSB's current process as approved by the Utah State Board of Education (USBE). While all required training, documentation, and reviews required by this approved process have been diligently undertaken, we acknowledge that the approved timeline for a school recently authorized has deviated from the originally sanctioned schedule. The SCSB has authorized its leadership to seek a waiver from the SCSB's process, as approved by the USBE, to allow an approved school to begin its operations during school year 2024-25 rather than waiting until the following school year.

I am writing to advocate for the establishment of the American Principles Academy, a public charter school group, within the boundaries of the Iron County School District (ICSD) in Cedar City. The American Principles Academy group has been in close collaboration with the SCSB for a span of two years. During this time, they have been responsive to the feedback provided, making requisite amendments to their application and board composition to address concerns raised by SCSB members. Moreover, they have conscientiously engaged with their local community to demonstrate the school's significance and desirability in the area. I am pleased to inform you that American Principles Academy enjoys the wholehearted support of the Iron County School District, even having a board member from ICSD actively participating on their board.

The SCSB firmly believes that this authorization aligns with the expressed needs of the community. As staunch advocates for educational choice, we have always held that it is paramount to heed the voices of the communities we serve.

It has come to our attention that certain concerns have arisen regarding the affiliation between American Principles Academy and American Preparatory Academy, both of which intend to engage charter management organization (CMO) services offered by American Preparatory



Schools. We fully recognize the concerns that USBE has raised regarding American Preparatory Schools. However, following extensive review and deliberation, the SCSB has arrived at a position of comfort regarding American Principles Academy's status as an independent institution, which will utilize CMO services through a shared provider.

The urgency surrounding our request for an expedited timeline is attributable to a unique opportunity presented to American Principles Academy in acquiring suitable property within the region, one that perfectly aligns with the school's needs. Obtaining suitable property has posed a formidable challenge for new charter schools in recent years. It is our prerogative to support them in their endeavor to secure the necessary property, particularly when they enjoy strong community backing.

Furthermore, we are unwavering in our commitment to adhere to all the Rules and Statutes that govern the authorization of charter schools. In this regard, the requirements stipulated for October 1st weigh heavily on our responsibilities as the authorizing body. By granting approval to American Principles Academy in September, we can fulfill the mandatory reporting obligations outlined by USBE in a timely manner.

Therefore, on behalf of the State Charter School Board, we earnestly request a waiver of R277-552, specifically in relation to the SCSB's authorization timeline for American Principles Academy. The motion from the September 14, 2023 board meeting was:

Assistant Attorney General Olson: "The board would be authorized to take those steps that are necessary to waive your process so this school can move forward with the State Board."

Vice Chair Phillips: "So moved."

Member Bassett: "I'll second."

Voting: Unanimous, with Member Smith absent, and Member Olson abstaining.

Should any further inquiries or clarifications be necessary, we stand ready and willing to engage in discussions as needed. We genuinely appreciate your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. W. Bryan Bowles".

Dr. W. Bryan Bowles
Board Chair