

UTAH SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

Advisory Council Meeting Summary

November 16, 2023

Openshaw Education Center

4:30 p.m. - General Session

Attending:

Jared Allebest, Voting Member
John Clements, Voting Member
Kiara Guymon, Voting Member, Zoom
Aunilie Hathaway, Voting Member
Jennifer Hayes, Voting Member
Ryan Hemming, Voting Member, Zoom
Sundie Marx, Non-Voting Member, Zoom
Philippe Montalette, Vice-Chair, Voting Member, Zoom
Katie Nelson, Voting Member
Shari Solomon-Klebba, Non-Voting Member
Ray Wright, Chair - Voting-Member

Also Attending:

Joel Coleman, Superintendent
Carl Empey, Finance Director
Tamara Flint, Executive Assistant
Susan Patten, USB Associate Superintendent
Michelle Tanner, USD Associate Superintendent, Zoom

Interpreters:

Emily Longshore, Interpreter
Cindy Anderson, Interpreter

Others:

Sarah Erb, Mother of a blind student
Jessie Stuart, Utah Land Trust Protection and Advocacy Office

1. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Wright welcomed Council members and guests in attendance to the November 16, 2023 Advisory Council meeting. Ms. Hathaway led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Comments

Sarah Erb - Sarah is a mother of a 4th grade blind student that attends a charter school. She has been reviewing the FY24 Enrichment Fund Projects list and noticed that the amount for visually impaired compared to deaf students is only about 33% and wonders how that is equitable to blind students across the state. She spoke with Susan Patten about this and was informed that the amount spent for both deaf and blind students is not necessarily based on student numbers. She would like a better explanation on the distribution of these funds. She is also wondering about the difference in pay for blind and deaf paraeducators. Blind paraeducators are earning about \$1.00 less than deaf paraeducators.

ACTION ITEMS

3. Consent Calendar

Mr. Wright asked Council members if they had any questions or concerns with the November 16, 2023 consent calendar. Mr. Montalette made a motion to accept the Advisory Council minutes for October 26, 2023, the Vacancy Report as of November 9, 2023 and the Donated Funds Account Summary as of October 31, 2023. Mr. Allebest seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous. Motion carried.

INFORMATION ITEMS

4. Space Camp Presentation

Brandon Watts, Director of Blind Outreach introduced himself to Council members. He informed members that Space Camp is a year round program in Huntsville, Alabama at a facility where astronauts used to train before their facilities moved to Houston, Texas. The camp is a program that schools, kids, and adults from around the world participate in to get the experience of training the way astronauts do and using the same equipment.

SCIVIS (S-C-I-V-I-S) stands for Space Camp for Interest Visually Impaired Students and has been an adapted camp for our population of students for more than 30 years. At the beginning of October, our students participated in one week of intense programs and training for space shuttle missions requiring students to take on roles and work as a team. All control panels, scripts and computers were adapted for students who are blind or have low vision. The students learn about the science of flight, engineering, physics, astronomy, and robotics in hands-on intensive settings with professionals in each of these areas. They also learn how to work as a team in a setting that is adapted for them and they are given the opportunity to be with students from around the country and work and feel a sense of community they otherwise may not experience.

Mr. Watts has attended space camp three times and it is by far my favorite camp for students who are blind or have low vision. He loves to see the students with similar interests in science and space come together and participate in the activities and also learn from employees of NASA who are blind and show the students that they can pursue their dreams. I also need to say that their food is the best part of any camp I've ever been to because they have every dietary need met with a blend of their southern style flavors.

Ms. Patten thanked them for presenting. Mr. Wright enjoys hearing the excitement in their voices about meeting new friends from all over the world.

5. FY24 Monthly Budget Update as of October 31, 2023

Mr. Empey welcomed Jessie Stuart, from the land grant committee. Thank you for joining us today. We appreciate your involvement.

Mr. Empey notified the Council that year to date expenditures for FY2024 are \$15,442,454 as of October 31, 2023. All areas covered in the Financial Report are operationally capable, with a remaining budget balance of \$39,705,146. Mr. Empey asked the Council if there were any questions or concerns regarding the Financial Report. There were no questions or concerns regarding the Financial Report from Council members.

Mr. Empey reviewed the status of Enrichment Funds as of October 31, 2023. USDB has spent approximately \$343,281 of its beginning balance of its annual FY24 Enrichment Funds budget of \$732,356. We receive an electronic wire transfer each quarter, so that total will continue to increase as the fiscal year

goes on. All remaining Enrichment Funds will be forwarded to the next fiscal year. Mr. Empey asked the Council if there were any additional questions or concerns regarding the Enrichment Funds. There were no questions or concerns regarding the Enrichment Funds expenditures from Council members.

Mr. Empey provided an update on USDB Donated funds. The balance as of October 31, 2023 was \$253,087.24. Mr. Empey asked the Council if there were any questions or concerns regarding the Donated funds. There were no questions or concerns regarding the USDB Donated Funds from Council members.

Mr. Empey reviewed the status of the Education Foundation as of October 31, 2023. The balance was \$1,159,040.54. Mr. Empey asked the Council if there were any questions or concerns regarding the Education Foundation funds. There were no questions or concerns regarding the Education Foundation from Council members.

Mr. Allebest feels that the issues that Ms. Erb raised during the public comment section should be addressed, but is not sure that this is the most appropriate time. Superintendent Coleman addressed the questions regarding pay for both deaf and blind paraeducators. An additional dollar per hour is provided for both paraeducators of the blind and deaf for knowing braille and ASL if it is needed in their jobs. As far as the additional question raised about equity in spending of enrichment funds, he noted that it is equitable, but not equal. We do not look at it that way. Our goal is to give each child what they need as much as possible. Each year, USDB comes to the AC with suggestions with input from staff, families, and community members. We are open to ideas and suggestions from anyone that would benefit from these funds. It is based on the needs of the students.

5. Superintendent Report

USIMAC - Superintendent Coleman reported that during our board meeting last week we discussed the possibility of being able to fund USIMAC from our operational funds for the next few years rather than asking for additional funds from the legislature due to our large carryforward balance. We will continue this discussion during our December meeting with the board.

DFCM - Superintendent Coleman noted that DFCM is close to choosing a firm to move forward with the SLC design plan.

Luminaria - Ms. Patten informed members that the Luminaria event took place last night. It was a great success. Thanksgiving Point has been such a great partner. They gave us 400 tickets and they were gone within two hours. Because of the high demand, we will be offering tickets for a second night, which will be on November 13th. We are taking the names from the waitlist of 600-700 people. She talked with students and families last night. We had private fire pits for USB.

Tactile Art Exhibit - Everyone who came had to be blind folded and it was a total touch and feel experience of the art. We are hoping to expand this in the future. Students were able to share their personal experiences in each art piece.

Teen Escape - We will be taking students to different cities like Tooele, Logan and Ogden to experience different cities.

Basketball - Girls and boys basketball begins in November and will end sometime in February. They have begun practicing and will be going to Tucson, AZ for a basketball tournament.

CEASD Survey - She has asked Advisory Council members to please fill out the survey that they received for the upcoming CEASD accreditation. This will help them understand the strengths and weaknesses of USD.

DeafBlind Conference - Jen Hayes noted that the deafblind conference was last weekend. What a wonderful experience. They spoke about literacy and made books in various different formats. It was a wonderful opportunity.

8. Future Agenda Items

No future agenda items.

9. Other

Please email any future agenda items to Ray Wright or Tamara Flint.

Reminder that there is no Advisory Council meeting in December. Our next Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2024.

The November 16, 2023 USDB Advisory Council meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.