

MINUTES OF THE
UTAH STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Thursday, January 18, 2023

USBE Board Rooms

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 (Virtual)

Member Michelle Smith (Virtual)

Staff Present:

Paul Kremer

Marie Steffensen

Lisa Cooper

Smriti Dhakal

Andrew Vardas-Doane

Brendan McGinn

Amber Hellstrom

Jenna Magnetti

Others Present:

AAG Kevin Olsen

(8:08 am) MEETING BEGINS

Public Comment

None

Member Thought -Chair Cynthia Phillips shared a personal anecdote about recognizing a student's unique learning needs, emphasizing the importance of individualized support. Vice Chair Phillips spoke about providing equitable resources, including policies, initiatives, and supports for students with diverse backgrounds.

Executive Director Report

1. **Charter School Authorizer Video Update:** An update on the charter school authorizer video was reported, highlighting the Board's supportive role and strategic plan.
2. **School Visits:** The Board conducted visits to various schools to understand their realities and ensure alignment with Board standards.
3. **Customized Performance Measures:** Work on developing customized performance measures for charter schools was discussed.
4. **Training Sessions with Assistant Attorney General:** The Board participated in training sessions with Assistant Attorney General Kevin Olson, focusing on legal aspects of charter school governance.

Consent Calendar

Vice Chair Phillips asked that Rockwell Charter High School's Bylaws be held from the consent calendar due to a conflict.

"Absolutely, we will hold that item" – Chair Bowels

Member Olsen – I'll go ahead and make a motion that we approve all the items on the consent calendar with the exception of the Rockwell bylaws amendment."

*Seconded by Member Bassett
Motion Passes Unanimously*

Member Olsen – "I'll go ahead and make a motion that we approve Rockwell bylaws included on the consent agenda"

*Seconded by Member Bassett
Motion Passes Unanimously*

Executive Director Report

Discussion on Charter School Expansion Policies: Detailed deliberation on small school expansion policies, emphasizing the need for balance between flexibility and consistency. The board discussed updates to charter school expansion application processes to remove prescriptive

language and give more flexibility to accommodate minor changes aligned to parent preferences or building configurations. This included shifting the small expansions definition from 50 students or fewer to between 50-100 students. They adopted an updated policy and procedure for small expansions to balance flexibility with clear standards.

Motion for Small Expansion Application Approval:

Member Smith: "I would like to adopt the proposed changes to the small expansion application."

Member Olsen: "Yes, I'll second that"

Motion Passes unanimously

Motion for Small Expansion Policy:

Member Smith: "I'd like to move that we adopt the updated small expansion policy."

Member Phillips: "I'll second that"

Motion Passes unanimously

Clarification requested by the board on criteria the board can consider during the approval process. Due for February board meeting

Motion for Small Expansion Procedure:

Member Smith: "I'd like to move that we adopt the proposed changes to the small expansion procedure with directive to staff to consider adjustments that would be necessary in light of a revised policy."

Member Bassett: "I'll second that"

Motion Passes unanimously

Start-Up and Implementation Grants

Dr. Kramer led a discussion focused on simplifying regulations, particularly for small to medium-sized entities. Consideration was given to using enrollment as the primary driver for grant amounts and the structure of the grant program.

Start-Up and Implementation Grants: The board discussed startup and implementation grants, now covering new and satellite schools, new curriculum, new programs, and innovative practices, with a two-year grant option.

Introduction to New School Application Process

1. **Application Stages:** The process for new school applications involves multiple stages, including video introductions, assignment completion, one-on-one meetings, successful proposal presentations, and participation in boot camps.
2. **Board Presentation:** Applicants are expected to present their full application to the board. This stage includes an opportunity for the board to question applicants and engage in thorough discussions about the proposals.
3. **Voting on Authorization:** Following the presentation and discussion, the board votes on whether to authorize the new school applications.

New School Application Review and Interview

New School Application Review and Interview: *Virtual Horizons Charter School*

The Virtual Horizons team presented their innovative virtual reality (VR) education program. Discussions revolved around academic outcome goals, potential conflicts of interest, and the structure and transparency of the proposed school. Board members express their excitement about the potential benefits of VR technology in education and plan to expand the board to ensure fair decision-making. Discussions also address the importance of addressing the technology infrastructure's accessibility for students with special needs.

BREAK

New School Application Review and Interview: *ThrivePoint Academy of Utah*

Action Item: *Discussion and vote on new school approval*

Member Cisneros - "I will make a motion that we approve Virtual Horizons charter school."

Seconded by member Speicher.

Member Bassett recused herself from the vote.

Passed unanimously among remaining board members.

Member Speicher - "I am going to make a motion to not move forward with Thrivepoint's application"

Member Bassett seconded the motion.

Member Cisneros: Against

Member Olsen: Against

Member Speicher: For

Member Bassett: For

Chair Bowels: Against

Motion Fails

Member Cisneros - "I'll make a motion that we approve ThrivePoint Academy with the contractual correction that they will be seeking statewide online."

Member Olsen seconded the motion.

Member Cisneros: For

Member Olsen: For

Member Speicher: Against

Member Bassett: Against

Chair Bowels: For

Motion Passes

ADJOURN FOR LUNCH

Introduction to Satellite and Large Expansion Application Process

Satellite Application Review and Interview: *Lincoln Academy*

Lincoln Academy presented a request to add a satellite high school to their existing K-9 institution, aiming to add 700 students in northern Utah County. The board discussed and approved this application.

Member Olsen motion to approve

Member Speicher seconded

Approved unanimously.

Satellite Application Review and Interview: *Syracuse Arts Academy*

Discussed their application for a third satellite campus to serve K-6 students, adding approximately 756 students. The proposed location is in the West Leighton area. The board approved their satellite application.

Member Olsen motion to approve

Member Bassett seconded

Approved unanimously.

Large Expansion Application Review and Interview: *Gateway Academy*

Gateway Academy presented plans to expand and accommodate an additional 2,000 students, using online hybrid models. The board discussed concerns about managing growth and maintaining quality but unanimously approved the expansion request.

Member Olsen motion to approve

Member Speicher seconded

Approved unanimously.

Large Expansion Application Review and Interview: *Lakeview Academy*

Lake View Academy discussed plans to add new programs and increase their service to around 1,500 students.

Vice Chair Phillips motion to approve

Member Bassett seconded

Approved unanimously.

Satellite Application Review and Interview: *Valley Academy Charter School*

Valley Academy, located in Hurricane, Utah, sought approval to add a ninth grade and create a permanent space for upper-level students.

Member Bassett motion to approve

Member Olsen seconded

Approved unanimously.

ADJOURN

Motion to Adjourn made by Member Speicher (2:41pm)