

**MINUTES OF THE**  
**UTAH STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

Thursday, February 8, 2024

USBE Board Rooms

250 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84111

[www.youtube.com/utahscsb](http://www.youtube.com/utahscsb)

**Members Present:**

Chair Bryan Bowles

Vice Chair Cynthia Phillips

Member Krystle Bassett

Member Stephanie Speicher (Virtual)

Member Rabecca Cisneros

Member Michelle Smith

**Staff Present:**

Paul Kremer

Marie Steffensen

Lisa Cooper

Smriti Dhakal

Andrew Vardas-Doane

Brendan McGinn

Amber Hellstrom

Jenna Magnetti

**Others Present:**

AAG Kevin Olsen

**(10:01 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**

*Member Smith, "I'd like to move that we adopt the consent calendar."  
Seconded by Member Bassett  
Motion Passes Unanimously*

### **Discussion and Action Item: Freedom Preparatory Academy Amendment Request**

Freedom Preparatory Academy requested the reinstatement of their online program, which had been previously discontinued due to not meeting certain requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic. The board discussed the implications of allowing online programs and the potential for these to extend beyond traditional school boundaries, raising questions about the materiality of location in charter authorizations.

A motion was made to amend the previous decision and allow Freedom Preparatory Academy to continue its online program, with the condition of statewide notification in compliance with board rules.

*Motion made by Member Cisneros, clarified by Chair Bowles "Motion to rescind the restriction for continuing online with for Freedom Preparatory Academy. Our motion is to allow them to within their agreement and numbers to continue with an online program should they choose to do so with the request that they send notification across the state if that's what they choose to do.*

*Seconded by Vice Chair Phillips*

*Motion Passes Unanimously*

*Motion made by Vice Chair Phillips, "I would like to move that the state Charter School Board staff review resending of the online offerings of charter schools who requested from the state board State Charter School Board a continuation of those programs in those cases where those programs were rescinded simply based on geographical boundary concern and bring back to the board a report that may inform our decision making."*

*Seconded by Member Bassett*

*Motion Passes Unanimously*

### **Discussion and Action Item: Elevated Charter School Pre-Operational Amendment Request**

Elevated Charter School presented a plan to gradually expand their enrollment, adding grades and students over several years. Currently authorized for grades K-6 with a capacity of 300 students, they sought to bring in students from grades 7-8 for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year. This expansion would increase their enrollment limit to 360 students.

*Motion made by Member Cisneros, "I'll make a motion to deny the request to add grades 7 and 8 in in school year 24-25 but to permit the grades and estimated number of students served by grade as proposed for year two ongoing"*

*Seconded by Member Smith*

*Passes Unanimously*

*ADJOURN FOR LUNCH 11:40am*

*RETURNED AT 12:32pm*

### **Discussion: Legislative Session Update**

Vice Chair Phillips' updates from the session:

1. Overview of legislative proposals impacting charter schools, including funding and regulatory changes.
2. Discussions on specific bills and their potential effects on charter school operations and autonomy.
3. Efforts to engage with legislators and advocate for the interests of charter schools.
4. The importance of staying informed on legislative developments to anticipate and adapt to changes.

### **Discussion and Action Item: Start-Up and Implementation Grants**

1. The board discussed updating the Charter School Start-Up and Implementation Grants, emphasizing simplicity and effectiveness.
2. They considered using enrollment as a primary factor for grant allocation but decided to maintain flexibility, including for innovative programs.
3. An inflation adjustment was proposed to ensure grants remain relevant over time.
4. The discussion concluded without a definitive action, indicating ongoing work and the need for further consideration.

#### **Discussion and Action Item: Small Expansion Process**

1. The process for small school expansion was reviewed, with a focus on providing clear guidelines and support for schools looking to expand.
2. The board aimed to streamline the application process, making it less burdensome for charter schools.
3. Specific criteria or decisions regarding small expansion processes were not detailed in the summary provided.

*Motion by Member Cisneros, "I would like to make a motion that we approve the small expansion process as presented."*

*Second from Vice Chair Phillips*

*Motion Passed Unanimously*

#### **Discussion and Action Item: SCSB Meeting Schedule for School Year 2024-2025**

1. This item likely involved planning and setting dates for board meetings throughout the 2024-2025 school year.
2. Specific dates or decisions related to the meeting schedule were not outlined in the summary provided.

*Motion by Member Smith, "I will move that we adopt the state Charter School Board regular meeting calendar as it has been presented."*

*Second by Vice Chair Phillips*

*Motion Passed Unanimously*

**Discussion and Action Item: Board Retreat and Professional Development**

1. The board discussed organizing a retreat aimed at professional development and strategic planning.
2. The focus was on team building, enhancing board effectiveness, and aligning on goals for the upcoming year.
3. Specific details on the retreat's content, location, or scheduling were not provided in the summary.

ADJOURN

*Motion to Adjourn made by Member Smith (1:53 pm)*

PENDING