

Thomas Edison Charter Schools
Governing Board Meeting
Date: February 5, 2025

Meeting called to order at 5:32 pm by Olivia Kirkham

Board Members Attending Electronically: Olivia Kirkham, Ryan Reeves, Corey Zhao, Lindsey Fowers, and Jeff Mason

Board Members Absent and Excused: James Lyman

Conducting: Olivia Kirkham

1. Adoption of the Agenda

2. Public Comments:

Principal Brad Larson publicly thanked the governing board for all they do for the schools.
Principal Melani Kirk agreed and publicly thanked the board.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes as distributed: Olivia Kirkham

Second: Ryan Reeves

Affirmative Vote: Olivia Kirkham, Ryan Reeves, Corey Zhao, Lindsey Fowers, and Jeff Mason

Resolved: motion passes unanimously

4. Board Training - Brian Carpenter Podcast #10 Annual Check-ups: They're not just for physicals

In this training, Brian Carpenter teaches about the importance of formal evaluations of the board regarding its responsibilities. The evaluation should focus on three main items: progress toward charter renewal, the performance of the school leader, and the performance of the board. In all three areas, the evaluations should determine “how well” the charter, administration, and board are working to meet the charter standards and needs of the students.

5. Board Training Discussion: P&P Manual PH: Philosophical Policies; The Seven Outs

This month’s training was chosen because board members were asked to do the board self-evaluation and in the coming months the board will be evaluating principal performance as well.

Governing board member Ryan Reeves asked if the governing board has ever been given feedback from the group that is in over the governing board. President Kirkham responded by explaining the Utah State Charter School Board (Utah SCSB) is the school’s authorizer and they perform a comprehensive evaluation of the charter school every 5 years. Thomas Edison had their evaluation in 2023 and they were very impressed with school’s governing board.

Board member Lindsey Fowers commented the book “The 7 Outs” was a little overwhelming and she didn’t realize there was so much board members are responsible for.

President Olivia Kirkham said the book reminded her about the charter's goals as well as the strategic outcome goals. As part of the comprehensive review done a few years ago, it was recommended that the school review the charter goals to see if they needed to be updated. Olivia is recommending the board wait to update the goals until after the Utah SCSB is updates the charter school accountability framework this March.

6. Board self-evaluation and goals

As a side note, the Utah SCSB celebrated 25 years of charters schools in January. There is also a charter school conference in June put on by the SCSB, and board members are invited to attend.

Board member Ryan Reeves said the school is performing really well and although there is room for improvement, he doesn't want to be too cumbersome since the processes right now are really streamlined. President Olivia Kirkham agreed.

Board member Lindsey Fowers stated that the evaluation made her aware that she doesn't spend very much time at South campus.

Board member Ryan Reeves said the school's finances are great.

Board member Lindsey Fowers asked if anyone had enrollment concerns since there are new middle schools being built very close to both schools. Principal Melani Kirk said she is not overly concerned since the school has an established reputation. Some students may leave to attend a newly built school but she thinks most of those will come back. Principal Brad Larsen said there will an impact on the school's enrollment but it's hard to say how much of an impact. Board member Ryan Reeves said the new middle schools will cause the middle school boundaries to be re-drawn, which may draw more people to the school. Currently, a lot of parents want their kids to go to school with their neighborhood kids but when the lines are re-drawn that will change that and the charter school will be just as appealing.

Board member Jeff Mason asked if there is a process in place to address any upcoming changes in legislation. President Olivia Kirkham said Jim Peterson watches the legislative session and reports on any updates or changes that apply to the school, so at the end of the session the board will have a to-do list with a timeline to meet those changes. Principal Brad Larsen mentioned the UAPCS also watches the legislative session and reports on updates that will affect charter schools. Principal Melani Kirk mentioned that UAPCS (Utah Association of Public Charter Schools) and UCN (Utah Charter Network) are at the legislative sessions lobbying for charter schools.

President Olivia Kirkham has the goal to finish updating the Policy and Procedures manual to ensure it's compliant to updated state rules, as well as to make sure the charter meets the new accountability framework.

7. TECS Philosophy: Jim Peterson

The document is called "Parent Power" and it encourages parents to take an active part in their student's education and it gives a good definition of an ideal charter school. For most charter schools, they are still bound to most if not all of state regulation and laws which doesn't give them

the autonomy they were originally built for, but Utah charter schools fair pretty well compared to most states. Currently, 13% of all students in Utah attend a charter school, which is comparable to other charter school friendly states.

8. Financial Report: Jim Peterson

As of January 31st, both schools are operating in the black and below the projected monthly average. North campus is running about \$20K below the monthly average and South campus is operating almost \$40K below the monthly average.

9. Legislative Update: Jim Peterson

Jim Peterson said the number one reason for supporting and having organizations like UAPCS and UCN is to help represent and fight for charter schools on Capital Hill.

Please refer to the handout, it is a list of bills that could have an impact on charter schools. The bills of most interest are HB1, SB 1 (base education budget amendment), SB 102, and SCR2.

Board member Ryan Reeves asked if there was any legislature that was against charter schools. Jim Peterson said not particularly against charter schools because unlike in the past the charter school community is strong and growing and there are also more political figures that are charter school friendly.

10. Student Data Report: Angela Barton

The state switched to the testing platform ALO (Acadience Learning Online), so the data reports look different than in previous years. The first page of her handouts explains how to interpret the data. She included in her reports the Effectiveness of Instructional Support which shows what happened with students in regards to their growth and performance. It's important to note how many students moved up in their performance levels which shows phenomenal growth because the tests get harder as the year goes on. The second handout she included is about progress monitoring. Students who are performing above their AIM line are receiving progress monitoring, which is showing intervention practices are working.

Angela reported on the school's proficiency rates for MOY testing. For reading, kindergarten increased from 67% to 78%, first grade increased from 72% to 83%, second grade increased from 80% to 82%, and third grade increased from 82% to 85%. For math, kindergarten increased from 70% to 83%, first grade decreased from 76% to 74%, second grade increased from 74% to 89%, and third grade increased from 80% to 92%.

11. Library Policy (4204): Noelle Harrild & Mandi Jenkins

The library has some updates to their policy to meet state requirements, specifically under sensitive materials. The verbiage comes directly from the state and is in regards to subjective and objective sensitive materials. They are still waiting on direction in regards to online and digital materials.

Motion to approve the amended library policy: Olivia Kirkham

Second: Corey Zhao

Affirmative Vote: Olivia Kirkham, Ryan Reeves, Corey Zhao, Lindsey Fowers, and Jeff Mason

Resolved: motion passes unanimously

12. Calendar Approval SY25-26

Principal Melani Kirk explained the calendar was made to try to coincide with the surrounding school districts. The main difference is this year is the start date is going to be August 20th and the last day of school is May 28th. Board member Ryan Reeves asked why at the start of school year there are a lot of 3- or 4-day weeks. Principal Melani Kirk explained it's a good way to help kids adjust to school after on summer break particularly for the younger grades.

Motion to approve the calendar that has been presented: Olivia Kirkham

Second: Lindsey Fowers

Affirmative Vote: Olivia Kirkham, Ryan Reeves, Corey Zhao, Lindsey Fowers, and Jeff Mason

Resolved: motion passes unanimously

13. Review community health statistics: Jamie Lewis

The board reviewed the community health statistics for Cache County. The school's health curriculum meets state standards and the school really encourages parents to get involved in discussing these concerns with their students.

The number of pornography complaints for the school is very minimal, around 5-10 incidents a year. These incidents are anything from a student drawing something inappropriate to trying to search something inappropriate on the computer.

14. Approve members of curriculum review committee

The curriculum review committee helps to review new and existing curriculum. The committee includes parents from both campuses, administration and staff. The members of the committee are:

Angela Barton

Jeremi Broadhurst

Courtney Carpenter

Sarah Hendricks

Melani Kirk

Heather Knight, Chairman

Carolyn Larsen

Jamie Lewis

Susan McKenzie, School Nurse

Ashley Mertlich

Hailey Robbins

Kelly Spencer

Marissa Zetterquist

Motion to approve the members of the curriculum review committee: Olivia Kirkham

Second: Ryan Reeves

Affirmative Vote: Olivia Kirkham, Ryan Reeves, Corey Zhao, Lindsey Fowers, and Jeff Mason

Resolved: motion passes unanimously

15. LAND Trust plan Approvals: Angela Barton

The North campus will receive about \$76,000 from LAND Trust. They plan to use \$38K for the Spalding program, \$38K on MTSS aides, and any additional funds will also go toward MTSS. The South campus will receive about \$108,000 from LAND Trust. They plan to use \$54K toward Spalding, \$54K on MTSS aides and additional funding will toward MTSS.

Motion to approve the LAND Trust allocation plans for both North and South campus as described: Olivia Kirkham

Second: Corey Zhao

Affirmative Vote: Olivia Kirkham, Ryan Reeves, Corey Zhao, Lindsey Fowers, and Jeff Mason

Resolved: motion passes unanimously

16. Gifted and Talented Grant: Angela Barton

The school applied for a gifted and talented grant. The gifted and talented programs are the before and after school band/orchestra classes at both North and South campuses and the after-school Art program at North campus. They look at the demographics that attend these programs and if a certain demographic is lacking they encourage participation in that demographic. This year they are looking to increase the male population in the gifted and talented program.

Board member Lindsey Fowers asked how the school is working towards getting more male involvement. Angela Barton said they are going to increase awareness of the programs, they do performances in morning greeting, lunch time, and at back-to-school night.

17. Board visits (expectations/scheduling): Olivia Kirkham

Board members are asked to schedule a day to visit one of the campuses or both, visit classrooms, visit lunch time, and get a feel for what happens in the school on a daily basis. Board members are asked to report at the next board meeting about their experience.

18. Principal Reports: Melani Kirk & Brad Larsen

North –

Enrollment 479 seats are filled out of 509 seats, and there are 12 students on the waitlist. The openings are currently in the younger grades.

The PO has put on some fun events, an ice-skating activity and their upcoming Valentine's auction and dinner.

The middle school citizenship party was held at the Jump Zone and it was well attended.

The robotics team did well in competition, the team the Robo Eagles is moving to another competition.

Harry Potter week was really impressive. The middle school student activities are based on comradery.

The furnace on the stage was replaced.

South –

Enrollment for next year is at 681, but they still have 31 kindergarten openings which they hope to fill over the next few months.

The citizenship percentages are high and most of the students who qualified attending the citizenship party.

The 8th graders took the Pre-ACT in December, and the average score was above the state benchmark in all four of the testing categories. In math, 76% of students are on target to be college ready, in science it's 69%, in English it's 92%, and reading it's 84%.

The school's Positive Behavior Plan is coming to an end, and all the students who participated in the program will get to celebrate after school at the park with seed bombs and apple nachos.

Harry Potter week was a success.

The school is working on safety measures. They are trying to ease into it, but as of next week the school doors will be locked and parents will have to check in to be let in.

19. Vendor & Personnel Requests: Melani Kirk & Brad Larsen

North -

Madison Borup – part-time MS Special Education position

Matthew Jensen – 4th grade Special Education aide

Liuba Percival – 5th grade Special Education aide

Motion to approve the personnel requests for North campus: Olivia Kirkham

Second: Ryan Reeves

Affirmative Vote: Olivia Kirkham, Ryan Reeves, Corey Zhao, Lindsey Fowers, and Jeff Mason

Resolved: motion passes unanimously

20. Adjourn at 7:00 pm