

MINUTES OF THE UTAH STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Thursday, May 8, 2025

10008 Creek Run Way, Sandy, UT, 84070

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Members Present:

- Chair Bryan Bowles
- Vice Chair Stephanie Speicher
- Member Krystle Bassett
- Member Rabecca Cisneros
- Member Clint Biesinger
- Member Erik Olson
- Member Susan Pulsipher

Staff Present:

- Dr. Paul Kremer
- Marie Steffensen
- Andrea Jones
- Amber Hellstrom
- Amy Pace
- Lisa Cooper
- Smriti Dhakal
- Brendan McGinn
- Betty Jimenez

Others Present:

- USBE Liaison Rod Hall (Virtual)

(9:15 AM) MEETING BEGINS

Public Comment

None

Consent Calendar

Member Olson: Chair I move to approve the consent calendar.

Member Biesinger: I second.

All members say “aye”. Motion passes unanimously.

Executive Director Report

Executive Director Dr. Kremer provided updates to the Board and staff, specifically addressing Board member replacement and the upcoming Chair and Vice Chair elections. He discussed the significant progress made by the SCSB committees, detailing the achievements and future goals of each committee. Furthermore, Dr. Kremer concluded his report with several staff updates, highlighting recent changes and developments within the team.

Discussion Item: LEA Board and Admin Surveys

Executive Director Dr. Kremer then proceeded to give an overview of the LEA Board and Admin surveys that SCSB Staff Member Smriti Dhakal had been diligently working on. These surveys covered various subjects including Clarity & Transparency, Consistency in Oversight, Timeliness & Responsiveness, Support for Continuous Improvement, General Perceptions & Relationships, Authorizer-School Relationship, Input & Value, and SCSB Values such as Excellence, Trust, Impact, Authenticity, and Compassion. Although the results of the surveys are still new, there is a hopeful outlook that the trends will become more positive over time. The SCSB Staff and Board are committed to ensuring that everyone feels supported and valued.

Presentation and Discussion Item: Statewide Cybersecurity Assessment - Utah Education Network (UEN) with CompuNet

Troy Jessup from UEN provided an enlightening presentation on the Cybersecurity Assessment Executive Overview. He detailed the assessment timeline, illustrating the meticulous process undertaken to evaluate cybersecurity measures across school districts and charter schools. The key findings revealed both progress and areas needing improvement.

Specifically, Jessup discussed the CIS Safeguard Implementation Status for charter schools, noting that while a significant number have successfully implemented these safeguards, many still require additional support. He emphasized the importance of appointing a cybersecurity specialist within these schools and adopting a more robust Strategic Cybersecurity Framework to ensure comprehensive protection against potential threats.

Discussion and Action Item: Accountability Framework

Executive Director Dr. Kremer gave an overview and discussed the Accountability Framework

that the SCSB Staff, Board, and other important groups have been working on for over a year now, referencing all the work done. Dr. Kremer suggested a motion for approval and adoption of the Accountability Framework Process as presented in the 30-Day Public Notice. Member Biesinger made a motion to approve and adopt the Accountability Framework Process as presented, including the Policy, Procedures, Forms, and other associated Practices. Moreover, to collaborate with USBE, LEAs, and other Stakeholders towards full implementation. Member Cisneros seconded that. All members said “aye”. Motion passed.

Update: Fiscal Year 2025 Budget to Actual

Dr. Kremer provided an in-depth analysis of the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget versus actual expenditures done by SCSB Staff member Lisa Cooper and the Finance Committee. He highlighted the areas where spending was aligned with the projected budget and explained the variances, shedding light on the reasons behind the spending. This comprehensive review was critical to ensure financial transparency and to set a precedent for more accurate budgeting in the future.

Presentation and Discussion Item: Fiscal Year 2026 Budget

Executive Director Dr. Kremer began the presentation on the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget by outlining the plan and fund allocations. The SCSB Finance Committee, aligning with USBE's recommendation, proposes merging the CHBD and CHFA PGA Programs into one—CHBD—and combining the CHMT and CHRГ PGB Programs into one—CHMT, both supported by USBE for FY26. They recommend adopting the FY26 Budget submitted by USBE at the program level with minor category adjustments and request USBE to officially adopt the revised SCSB FY26 Budget. The Committee suggests using up to \$267,800 of the \$307,800 one-time Legislative reduction from CHBD FY25 funds, with remaining needs covered by carryforward balances, adhering to USBE's advice that all one-time costs must be sourced from FY25 to avoid over-budget issues.

Discussion and Action Item: Transfer Proposal - Moab Charter School to Athenian eAcademy

Member Biesinger recused himself from voting on this matter, citing his personal work with Athenian eAcademy. He offered his support if needed. Associate Executive Director Marie Steffensen provided the policy enabling this transfer. Executive Director Dr. Kremer noted that the proposal was submitted late and didn't make it to the Board, thus changing the item from an Action Item to a Discussion Item. The Board listened to representatives from Moab Charter School and Athenian eAcademy regarding the transfer proposal, with plans to revisit the matter at June's Board meeting.

Discussion and Action Item: Providence Hall Report – Continuation of Amendment

Associate Executive Director Marie Steffensen gave an overview of this item stating back in the spring of 2022 Providence Hall came to the Board and requested a material change to their charter, which was removing the International Baccalaureate program from their secondary

grades. Providence Hall is back to ask for the continuation of the Amendment which would then be added into their charter agreement. Providence Hall gave an overview on the changes that have been made since 2022 and the progress that has been made from the changes. Member Olson makes a motion to approve the continuation Amendment permanent. Member Cisneros seconds the motion. All members say “aye”. Motion passed.

Discussion and Action Item: Chair and Vice Chair Elections

Vice Chair Stephanie Speicher spoke about the new Chair and Vice Chair roles following Chair Bowles' resignation. She announced that there were two nominations: she herself would become Chair, and Member Erik Olson would become Vice Chair. The change would take effect immediately. Member Clint Biesinger made a motion to approve Stephanie Speicher as Board Chair and Erik Olson as Board Vice Chair effective immediately. Member Krystle Bassett seconded the motion. All members said “aye”. Motion passed.

The Board and SCSB Staff bid a heartfelt farewell to former Chair Bryan Bowles, expressing their appreciation and gratitude. They shared memories and stories of Bryan. The event concluded with a message from Governor Cox, thanking Bryan for his contributions to Utah's children and Bryan giving a thank you to everyone.

(12:56 PM) ADJOURN