

UTAH SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

Advisory Council Meeting Summary

September 25, 2025

Openshaw Education Center

4:30 p.m. - General Session

Attending: John Clements, Voting Member, Zoom
Kiara Guymon, Voting Member, Zoom
Aunilie Hathaway, Voting Member
Shari Solomon-Klebba, Non-Voting Member
Philippe Montalette, Vice-Chair, Voting Member
Katie Nelson, Voting Member, Zoom
Amy Query, Voting Member
Gretel Sampson, Non-Voting Member
LeAnn Wood, Non-Voting Member
Ray Wright, Chair, Voting Member

Absent: Kari Harbath, Voting Member

Also Attending:

Tamara Flint, Executive Assistant
Deborah Jacobson, USBE Assistant Superintendent of Operations - Zoom
Darin Nielsen, USDB Assistant Superintendent
Susan Patten, USB Associate Superintendent
Vicki Summers, Finance Manager, Zoom
Dr. Michelle Tanner, USD Associate Superintendent

Interpreters:

Cindy Andersen, Interpreter
Emily Longshore, Interpreter

Others:

Sarah Erb, Parent of a blind student
Yvonne Montalette, Visitor
Jonathan Helgesen, USD Extracurricular Director
Paula Plant, Schools Children's Trust Director
Liz Mumford, Trust Advocacy Office

Jacquelyn Phillips, USB Executive Assistant

1. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Wright welcomed Council members in attendance to the September 25, 2025 Advisory Council meeting. Ms. Guymon led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Wright introduced USDB Assistant Superintendent Darin Nielsen. Advisory Council members introduced themselves and shared what positions they support for the Advisory Council. Assistant Superintendent Nielsen provided background on himself and noted that he is working under Superintendent Hart.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

ACTION ITEMS

3. Consent Calendar

Mr. Wright asked Council members if they had any questions or concerns regarding the September 25, 2025 consent calendar. There were no questions or concerns. Mr. Montalette made a motion to accept the Advisory Council minutes for August 28, 2025, the Vacancy Report as of September 18, 2025 and the Donated Accounts Summary as of August 31, 2025. Ms. Hathaway seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous. Motion carried.

4. Enrichment Fund Requests

Ms. Patten reviewed an Enrichment Funds request that was tabled during the August Advisory Council meeting. The Enrichment Funds committee met to put in place certain parameters for requesting Enrichment funds for LEA and Family purposes. This request is for \$310 for registration for a 5th grade student to attend Utah Valley Coalition which is a five week conference . Skills that the student would gain from this event include community readiness skills, orientation & mobility, self-determination, independent living skills, social interaction, recreation & leisure. October 9th - November 20th at Utah Valley Coalition.

Chair Wright asked for a motion. Ms. Hathaway made a motion to approve the Enrichment request of \$310. Ms. Nelson seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous. Motion carried.

INFORMATION ITEMS

5. Budget Update

Ms. Jacobson, Assistant Superintendent of Operations apologized for not being able to be there in person, but she is at a conference out of state. She oversees financial operations at USBE and USDB. She worked for the USDB for 21 years and has been with the USBE for 11 years. She is very familiar with USDB and is happy to be in this position to help.

She reported on the recent mandate to separate the two permanent trust funds (Enrichment Funds) into distinct trusts for the Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. Ms. Jacobson explained that the School for the Deaf's trust fund holds significantly less capital than the land dedicated to the School for the Blind. This funding disparity necessitates significant cuts to the Deaf school's 2025-2026 enrichment programs, raising concerns about the impact on student activities and language development. The Council discussed options to close the gap, including parent contributions and fundraising; however, these approaches face limitations due to administrative hurdles and student financial needs. To address the immediate shortfall, the Deaf school is considering reaching out to the USDB Foundation for temporary support while long-term solutions are explored. In addition, Ms. Jacobson is working with USDB staff to determine if budget adjustments can be made within the School for the Blind and their enrichment fund to mitigate the needs of the School for the Deaf.

Chair Wright wondered if this is a one year deficit or ongoing. Ms. Jacobson noted that it will be ongoing. There were 12 beneficiaries with the deaf and blind school being two of them. There are lands identified for each of these individual trusts. There is a big gap because some of the blind school lands were sold and there was a lump sum put into their trusts. The deaf school has more land and less interest coming in. Chair Wright thanked Ms. Jacobson for her detailed explanation. We will continue to address short term and long term solutions.

6. Audit Discussion/Review Board Policy 4002

Mr. Darin Nielsen presented an overview of the audit's four primary areas of recommendations: organizational structure, competency and accountability, policy, and data and funding. In addition, the Council reviewed a recommendation from Darin Nielsen proposing two changes to Board Policy 4002. The first change would modify the meeting schedule, allowing the Council to meet up to ten times per year rather than requiring a minimum of ten

meetings. This adjustment was prompted by a recent audit finding that highlighted the difficulty in consistently meeting the current requirement. The second change clarifies that the Advisory Council also functions as the Community Council for the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. The Council was supportive of both recommendations, and the formal request will be forwarded to the USDB standing committee on October 14.

7. School Land Trust/Community Council Discussion

Paula Plant, School Children's Trust Director, provided the Advisory Council (which serves as the USDB school community council) with training on community council responsibilities and duties, as mandated by state statute 53G-7-1206. The training focused on the responsibilities and timeline for School Trust Program implementation, emphasizing the requirement for academic planning and evidence-based decision-making. Key requirements discussed included posting specific information such as rules of order, member bios with contact details, and meeting schedules on the school websites by October 20th.

8. 2025-26 USDB Positive Behavior Plans

Associate Superintendents Dr. Tanner and Ms. Patten shared the Positive Behavior Plans that have been created with input from students, parents, and staff. The council was supportive of these plans that will now be advanced to the October 14 USDB standing committee.

9. Enrichment Subcommittee Follow-up

Ms. Patten met with the Enrichment Subcommittee members that included Mr. Montalette, Mr. Wright, Ms. Query and Ms. Nelson to discuss specific parameters for future Enrichment Funds requests. Ms. Patten reviewed the changes that were made on the LEA and Family Enrichment request. The application has been changed which has been included in the link [change link on family](#) as it is the LEA application to include:

LEA - special interest support

Regional activities for students with blindness, low vision, or deafblindness

\$1,875 per student/per year for a total of \$25,000

Family - special interest support

\$750 per student on family application with a max of \$10,000

10. USDB Subcommittee Update

Member Wood noted that she is heading to Southern Utah to attend a conference to help new board members become better board members. Our last standing committee meeting voted on the USDB student owned device policy and did a deep dive of the recent USBE audit. A motion will be coming to the board to change the statute to appoint someone to the USDB as it is currently functioning under USBE.

11. Superintendent Report

USD - Dr. Tanner

School Improvement Plan - We are working on this as it is constantly being reviewed. We will bring this to Council when it is finalized.

Volleyball - Our volleyball team is at Idaho School for the Deaf and has won their first three games.

USB - Ms. Patten

TVI Memo - This memo goes out monthly statewide to TVI's to get the information out to parents via our TVI's, board members and Advisory Council. We want to streamline this information, so that it is reaching everyone and are open to any ideas on how to reach more parents. We encourage Advisory Council members to attend any of these activities. We are also trying to hit different regions of the state to meet the needs of students statewide.

12. Future Agenda Items

Space Camp presentation - postponed until November 20, 2025
Review 2024-25 USDB Annual Report
FY26 Enrichment Funds List
USDB Subcommittee report - Member Wood

13. Other

Mr. Wright thanked everyone for attending the September 25, 2025 Advisory Council meeting. Our next meeting will be October 23, 2025.

October 7th Annual DSBVI Open House from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Please email any future agenda items to Ray Wright or Tamara Flint.
The September 25, 2025 Advisory Council meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m