



The meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom.

Members Present: Chair LeAnn Wood, Vice Chair Randy Boothe, Member Cindy Davis, Member Joann Brinton, and Member Erin Longacre

USDB Committee Staff: Leah Voorhies, USBE Deputy Superintendent; Darin Nielsen, USDB Interim Assistant Superintendent; Susan Patten and Michelle Tanner, USDB Associate Superintendents; Ashley Biehl, Assistant Attorney General (AAG); Andrea Curtin, Secretary; Cindy Andersen, and Bethany Anderson, Interpreters.

Others Present: Jerry Record and Alex Farah, USBE IT/Media Production Specialists; Molly Hart, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Scott Jones, Deputy Superintendent; Elisse Newey, Deputy Superintendent, Jennie Earl, Board Member; Sarah Erb and Brooke Grossinger, parents; and Closed Captioning Services.

USDB Committee Chair LeAnn Wood called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

INFORMATION: Public Comment

1. Sarah Erb, parent of a blind student, made public comments about the USDB Advisory Council/Community Counsel.
2. Brooke Grossinger, parent of deaf students, made comment about the needs for deaf students especially extracurricular activities.

6.2 ACTION: DeafEd Alternate Pathway to Professional Educator Licensing (APPEL)

Committee Discussion: Michelle Tanner, Associate Superintendent, outlined the USDB's proposed APPEL program. The program will:

- Provide an alternative pathway to licensure for candidates seeking to serve students who are deaf and hard of hearing (birth - 22).
- Stabilize Deaf Education programs statewide by expanding and retaining a qualified workforce.
- Ensure all candidates meet the standards outlined in R277-514 (Deaf Education Licensing) and the Utah Effective Educator Standards.

This program aligns with USBE's APPEL framework already established for Special Education and other license areas and adapts it to the unique needs of Deaf Education. Over the past decade, the number of university programs in Utah preparing teachers of the Deaf has dwindled from two institutions in the State of Utah to a single operating program. This mirrors a national trend of decline in Deaf Education teacher preparation programs. Across the country, these specialized programs are struggling to maintain



enrollment, faculty, and funding, leading to a critical shortage of qualified teachers who can serve Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.

USDB, as the state's designated public education provider for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, has faced increasing difficulty recruiting and retaining licensed Teachers of the Deaf. The shortage has resulted in an overreliance on emergency authorizations and out-of-state recruitment, both of which are unsustainable solutions for a statewide education system that serves children from birth through age 22.

To address this urgent need, USDB and the Utah State Board of Education have collaborated over the past several years to design a [Deaf Education APPEL program](#). This program was very recently approved by USBE staff and provides an alternative route for qualified individuals to earn full professional licensure while being mentored and evaluated through a rigorous, competency-based framework.

Program Overview

The proposed USDB Deaf Education APPEL Program is designed to:

- Build a sustainable pipeline of licensed Teachers of the Deaf across Utah.
- Maintain high professional and instructional standards aligned with Deaf Education competencies established by USBE.
- Provide a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) for each participant that includes coursework, mentoring, and ongoing performance evaluation.
- Support USBE's mission to expand access to high-quality educators in specialized hard-to-staff fields.

The program will operate under the oversight of USDB and will adhere to all requirements outlined in R277-303 (Educator Preparation Programs) and R277-304 (Educator Licensing – Associate and Professional Educator Licenses).

Committee Action: Member Boothe moved the USDB Standing Committee approve the USDB as an authorized APPEL sponsor for Deaf Education (Birth–22) and authorizes USDB to implement the program in accordance with Utah Code §53E-6-306 and Rules R277-303 and R277-304 and forward to the Board for final approval.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion for the Board: That the Board approve USDB as an authorized APPEL sponsor for Deaf Education (Birth–22) and authorizes USDB to implement the program in accordance with Utah Code §53E-6-306 and Rules R277-303 and R277-304.

6.3 ACTION: 2025-26 USDB Positive Behavior Plans

Committee Discussion: Michelle Tanner, Associate Superintendent, presented the USDB's positive behavior plans. Under Board Rule R277-609, each school principal is required to create a Positive Behavior Plan with input from students, parents, and staff and then submit the plan for LEA governing board approval. These plans must address issues such as peer pressure, mental health, and the creation of meaningful relationships.



Additionally, the law requires the designation of Positive Behavior Specialists at each school to administer the plans. Annual reports will be provided by specialists to the Governing Board detailing implementation and USDB will submit the required annual confirmation to the State Board of Education.

Committee Action: Member Davis moved that the USDB Standing Committee approve the USDB Positive Behavior Plans for JMS, KBS, EDS, SUSD Online and Utah School for the Blind in compliance with UCA 53G-10-407 on first reading and forward to the Board for final approval.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion for the Board: That the Board approve the USDB Positive Behavior Plans for JMS, KBS, EDS, SUSD Online and Utah School for the Blind in compliance with UCA 53G-10-407 on second and final reading.

6.4 ACTION: Paid Professional Hours for Educators Policy

Committee Discussion: Michelle Tanner, Associate Superintendent, presented on Board Rule R277-629. The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (USDB) to allocate and monitor state-appropriated funds designated for paid professional hours, ensuring compliance with [Utah Code § 53F-7-203](#), [Utah Code § 53F-9-204](#), and [Utah Administrative Rule R277-629](#), while supporting high-quality professional learning for educators. Educators eligible for participation include licensed teachers, specialists, school counselors, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and other certified staff employed by USDB at least 50% FTE or greater.

Committee Action: Member Boothe moved that the USDB Standing Committee approve the USDB Paid Professional Hours to Educators policy in compliance with R277-629 on first reading and forward to the Board for final approval.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion for the Board: that the Board approve the USDB Paid Professional Hours to Educators policy in compliance with R277-629 on first reading and forward to the Board for final approval.

6.5 ACTION: USDB Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, Hazing and Retaliation Policy

Committee Discussion: Michelle Tanner, Associate Superintendent, presented on Board Rule R277-613. The purpose of this rule is to:

- (a) require LEAs to develop, update, and implement bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing, retaliation, and abusive conduct policies at the school district and school level;



- (b) provide for regular and meaningful training of school employees and students;
- (c) provide for enforcement of the policies in schools, at the state level and in public school athletic programs;
- (d) require an LEA to review allegations of bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing, retaliation, and abusive conduct; and
- (e) require an LEA to report bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing, and retaliation.

Committee Action: Member Davis moved that the USDB Standing Committee approve the USDB Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, Hazing and Retaliation Policy on first reading and forward to the Board for final approval.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion for the Board: That the Board approve the USDB Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, Hazing and Retaliation Policy on second and final reading.

6.6 ACTION: USDB Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

Committee Discussion: Michelle Tanner, Associate Superintendent, presented a new USDB policy on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use, draft 1. This policy establishes responsible and secure use of AI—including generative AI across USDB academic, administrative, and transportation systems. It applies to students, staff, teachers, administrators, contractors, and third-party vendors using AI tools. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the ethical and effective use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies at USDB. This policy aims to enhance learning experiences while ensuring the safety, privacy, and well-being of students and staff.

Committee Action: Member Brinton moved to update 2.8. to read, “Ethical Considerations: AI tools must be used in a way that promotes fairness and **equity neutrality**. They should not reinforce biases or discrimination. Students and staff should be educated about the ethical implications of AI, including issues related to privacy, bias, and misinformation. The use of AI should comply with all relevant laws and regulations, including those related to data protection and privacy.”

Committee Action: Member Wood amendment: replace equity with “**opportunity**”

Motion passes unanimously.

Committee Action: Member Brinton moved to define the purpose of the AI Oversight Committee in Section 3.3 as: “A committee focused on **evaluating AI tools for privacy compliance, academic integrity risks, data security protocols** and comprised of a USDB Administrator, an Educational Technology Specialist, and the Director of the Information Technology team.”



Committee Action: Member Davis moved to amend: add after protocols and “**the AI guiding principles in this document**”.

Committee Action: Member Boothe motion to amend 3.3 to read “**A Committee comprised of a USDB Administrator, an Educational Technology Specialist, and the Director of the Information Technology team shall evaluate AI tools for privacy compliance, academic integrity risks, data security protocols and the AI guiding principles in this document.**”

Motion: passes unanimously.

Committee Action: Member Brinton motion to amend Section 9.2 to read: “**Explicit written parental consent will be obtained when necessary (e.g., AI tools that process student data beyond basic directory information).**”

Motion: passes unanimously.

Committee Action: Member Boothe moved that the USDB Standing Committee approve the USDB Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy, Draft 1, as amended on first reading and forward to the Board for final approval.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion for the Board: That the Board approve the USDB Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy, Draft 2, on second and final reading.

6.7 ACTION: Utah State Board of Education Policy 4002

Committee Discussion: Member Davis moved to postpone agenda 1.7 to next month.

Motion passed unanimously.

6.2.1 Closed Session – Closed in accordance with the Utah Open and Public Meetings Act

A closed session was not held for this meeting.

Committee Action: Member Boothe made a motion to adjourn.

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

