

# **Merit Prep Academy Board of Directors**

## **Special Board Meeting Minutes**

### **November 10, 2025, 5:00 p.m.**

#### **Attendance**

- In person: Rachel Jay (President), Jeri Mellor, Mary Howell
- Virtual: Dave Jensen, Ashley Watts, Heidi Bingham, Aaron Cook
- Administration: David Wiseman

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

#### **Public Comment**

No members of the public were present. David Wiseman (administration) declined to provide comment at this time.

#### **Action Item: Review and Approval of Amendment to Exhibit A (Enrollment Cap and Hybrid/Online Programs)**

The board reviewed the administration's request to amend Exhibit A of the school's charter to:

- Increase the overall enrollment cap from 600 to 800 students
- Authorize the school to offer hybrid and online courses

David Wiseman presented the proposed amendment language and accompanying rationale/justification required for submission to the Utah State Charter School Board.

#### **Key Discussion Points and Questions Raised**

- Significant policy work will be required to support online/hybrid programs, including revisions to nearly all existing policies and creation of new policies covering attendance, technology access/equity, vendor selection, enrollment, accommodations for ELL and special education students, grievance procedures, data management, and program structure.
- Concern was expressed about the volume of policy work and the need for broad collaboration beyond the policy committee.
- David Wiseman confirmed that he will shoulder the majority of the policy development (with full-time focus after role transition), that policies/procedures will be fully in place before launch, and that rollout will occur in stages (beginning with English classes in Fall 2026).
- The state provides guidelines and requires detailed plans for many of the identified issues as part of the Separate Online Education Program (SOEP) approval process.
- Financial considerations: Potential \$2 million expansion grant if cap increase is approved; revenue from online courses will fund technology needs (e.g., providing devices where required for equity); initial rollout will use existing staff release time rather than new hires; Canvas platform available at no cost through state contract.
- Clarification on "part-time" and "hybrid" terminology: Online students may enroll in one or more classes without being full-time or on-campus Merit students; no student may currently earn a full diploma entirely online under state rules (max ~6 credits/year).
- Discussion of potential future partnerships with entities such as MyTech/Harmony/Connections for homeschool students; board consensus was to defer this topic and focus on developing Merit's own courses rather than third-party placement models at this time.
- Contingency planning: If not ready for Fall 2026 launch, the amendment language uses permissive ("may offer") rather than mandatory wording; delay would have no adverse consequences beyond continued business-as-usual operations.
- Minor clarifications on use of "equity" in the rationale (fair access, non-selective enrollment, provision of technology where needed).

**Motion and Vote**

Mary Howell moved to approve submission of the proposed amendment to Exhibit A to the Utah State Charter School Board.  
Jeri Mellor seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:**

- Rachel Jay – Aye
- Jeri Mellor – Aye
- Mary Howell – Aye
- Heidi Bingham – Aye
- Dave Jensen – Aye
- Ashley Watts – Aye
- Aaron Cook – Aye

Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

**Action Items**

- David Wiseman to finalize and submit the Exhibit A amendment and rationale to the State Charter School Board.
- Administration to continue policy development and SOEP application preparation; board to review and approve policies as proposed in future meetings.
- Administration to provide updates on timeline, state feedback, and potential board representation at future State Charter School Board meetings.

**Executive Session**

Mary Howell moved to enter executive session to discuss the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual.

Jeri Mellor seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Unanimous approval.

The public recording was stopped, and the meeting entered executive session.

The board exited executive session and resumed the public recording. The board agreed to take actions as discussed during the executive session (details limited to executive session per state law).

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

-Dave Jensen

Board Secretary