

MINUTES OF THE UTAH STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Thursday, January 8, 2026

10008 Creek Run Way, Sandy, UT, 84070

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Members Present:

- Chair Stephanie Speicher
- Vice Chair Erik Olson
- Member Susan Pulsipher
- Member Krystle Bassett
- Member Stacey Hutchings
- Member Clint Biesinger
- Member Nathan Marshall (Virtual)

Members Excused and Not Present:

Staff Present:

- Marie Steffensen
- Andrea Jones
- Amber Hellstrom
- Lisa Cooper
- Smriti Dhakal
- Betty Jimenez
- Amy Pace
- Jenna Magnetti

Staff Not Present:

- Brendan McGinn

Others Present:

- USBE Liaison Rod Hall (virtually)
- AAG Darin Goff

Public Comment (0)

(8:00AM) MEETING BEGINS

Consent Calendar

Board Member Krystle Bassett: "I move to approve the consent calendar."

Member Susan Pulsipher: "I will second."

All members present say "Aye." Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and Action Item: Charter School Revolving Loan Committee Report

Although this item was set to be discussed first on the agenda the board found that discussing and voting on it was better to do after all new charter application interviews. Member Clint Biesinger did abstain from voting on Azure Fields.

Member Stacey Hutchings: "I will make a motion that we recommend to provide 200,000 from the revolving loan funds to Azure Fields."

Member Krystle Bassett: "I will second."

All voting members vote "aye." In agreement.

Member Clint Biesinger: "I move we recommend approval for Virtual Horizons for 100,000 and to table Bear River application."

Member Krystle Bassett: "I second."

All members say "aye." In agreement.

Discussion and Action Item: Legislative Updates from UAPCS

Royce Van Tassell, from the Utah Association of Public Charter Schools, provided an update on the legislative session and highlighted important items to be aware of.

Discussion and Action Item: Legislative Updates from UCN

Kim Frank from the Utah Charter Network, provided an update on the legislative session and highlighted important items to be aware of.

Information Item: Introduction to New School Application Process

Interim Executive Director Marie Steffensen provided an update on the new school application process, outlining important steps and upcoming deadlines for applicants and all that has been done by the applicants. She also shared a few key reminders with the board per code and board rule.

Charter Application Review and Action:

- **Ensign Leadership Academy**
- **Ripple Academy**

The Ensign Leadership Academy provided introductory remarks and subsequently engaged in an extensive discussion with the SCSB Board, addressing concerns raised by board members, ultimately getting approved by the SCSB Board.

Member Clint Biesinger: “I move to approve Ensign Leadership Academy with a cap of 1536 for the 27/28 school year.”

Member Stacey Hutchings: “I will second.”

Roll Call Vote:

- Member Clint Biesinger: “Yes”
- Member Susan Pulsipher: “Yes”
- Member Stacey Hutchings: “Yes”
- Member Krystle Bassett: “Yes”
- Vice Chair Erik Olson: “Yes”
- Member Nathan Marshall: “Yes”
- Chair Stephanie Speicher: “Yes”

Ripple Academy, as a returning applicant, provided an introduction that included new members of their team. They participated in several discussions with the SCSB Board, ultimately being approved.

Member Clint Biesinger: “I’d like to motion that we approve Ripple Academy, but I would like to amend their students cap to 525 instead of 415 in case they need a little extra flexibility and works within their needs.”

Member Krystle Bassett: “I will second.”

Roll Call Vote:

- Member Clint Biesinger: “Yes”
- Member Susan Pulsipher: “Yes”
- Member Stacey Hutchings: “Yes”
- Member Krystle Bassett: “Yes”
- Vice Chair Erik Olson: “Yes”
- Member Nathan Marshall: “Yes”
- Chair Stephanie Speicher: “Yes”

Charter Application Review and Action:

- **Louisa May Alcott Community School**

Representatives from Louisa May Alcott Community School gave their introductions and provided additional responses to questions from the board, offering further clarification about their charter application, ultimately being approved by the SCSB Board.

Vice Chair Erik Olson: “I will move we approve Louisa May Alcott Community School charter application authorizing them to 528 students as a maximum enrollment.”

Member Susan Pulsipher: “I will second.”

Roll Call Vote:

- Vice Chair Erik Olson: “Yes”
- Member Clint Biesinger: “Yes”
- Member Susan Pulsipher: “Yes”
- Member Stacey Hutchings: “Yes”
- Member Krystle Bassett: “Yes”
- Member Nathan Marshall: “Yes”
- Chair Stephanie Speicher: “Yes”

Charter Application Review and Action:

- **The Dawn Institute**
- **Cambridge Preparatory Academy**

Representatives from The Dawn Institute reintroduced themselves to the board. In response to concerns raised by the board, the representatives shared their perspectives, leading to a few discussions, ultimately leading to the board voting not approving the Dawn Institute but encouraging them to come back to the next application season with the help of SCSB staff.

Member Clint Biesinger: “I recommend making a motion we do not approve the application of the Dawn Institute.”

Member Nathan Marshall: “I will second.”

Roll Call Vote:

- Member Clint Biesinger: “Yes”
- Member Susan Pulsipher: “Yes”
- Member Stacey Hutchings: “Yes”
- Member Krystle Bassett: “Yes”

- Vice Chair Erik Olson: “Yes”
- Member Nathan Marshall: “Yes”
- Chair Stephanie Speicher: “Yes”

Cambridge Preparatory Academy, a returning applicant, gave their introduction followed by questions and engagement about their charter application with the board, ultimately being approved.

Member Stacey Hutchings: “I will make a motion we approve the proposal of Cambridge Preparatory Academy with the cap of 450.”

Member Susan Pulsipher: “I will second.”

Roll Call Vote:

- Member Nathan Marshall: “Yes”
- Member Stacey Hutchings: “Yes”
- Member Krystle Bassett: “Yes”
- Vice Chair Erik Olson: “Yes”
- Member Clint Biesinger: “Yes”
- Member Susan Pulsipher: “Yes”
- Chair Stephanie Speicher: “Yes”

Charter Application Review and Action:

- **Daybreak Aspen Academy**
- **Keystone Academy**

Daybreak Aspen Academy provided brief introductions, after which the board shared questions and concerns. The academy also announced a name change from Daybreak Aspen Academy to Aspen Academy, since they will no longer be located in the Daybreak area. They were approved by the SCSB Board.

Member Susan Pulsipher: “I will make a motion that we approve the Daybreak Academy to move forward with K-8 and a cap of 600.”

Member Clint Biesinger: “I will second.”

Roll Call Vote:

- Member Susan Pulsipher: “Yes”

- Member Clint Biesinger: “Yes”
- Vice Chair Erik Olson: “Yes”
- Member Nathan Marshall: “Yes”
- Member Stacey Hutchings: “Yes”
- Member Krystle Bassett: “Yes”
- Chair Stephanie Speicher: “Yes”

Keystone Academy introduced themselves, addressed questions and concerns from the board, but was not approved. The board encouraged them to work with staff and reapply next season.

Member Clint Biesinger: “I will make a motion that we do not move forward with Keystone Academy but we invite them to work with staff and come back.”

Vice Chair Erik Olson: “I will second that.”

Roll Call Vote:

- Member Clint Biesinger: “Yes”
- Member Susan Pulsipher: “No”
- Member Stacey Hutchings: “Yes”
- Member Krystle Bassett: “No”
- Member Nathan Marshall: “Yes”
- Vice Chair Erik Olson: “Yes”
- Chair Stephanie Speicher: “Yes”

(5:28PM) ADJOURN

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