

MINUTES OF THE UTAH STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Thursday, August 13, 2026

10008 Creek Run Way, Sandy, UT, 84070

www.youtube.com/utahscsb

Members Present:

- Chair Stephanie Speicher (Virtually)
- Vice Chair Clint Biesinger
- Member Susan Pulsipher
- Member Mickelle Bos
- Member Brandon Johnson
- Member Nathan Marshall

Members Excused and Not Present:

- Member Adam Gerlach

Staff Present:

- Stacey Hutchings
- Lincoln Fillmore
- Andrea Jones
- Amber Hellstrom
- Lisa Cooper-Looock
- Smriti Dhakal
- Betty Jimenez
- Amy Pace
- Brendan McGinn

Staff Not Present:

- Jenna Magnetti

Others Present:

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

Public Comment (1)

Taylor Smith with ThrivePoint Academy made a public comment on the success of Thrivepoint, work they have been doing and items they will be achieving in the future.

(9:10AM) MEETING BEGINS

Consent Calendar

Member Susan Pulsipher: "I motion to approve the consent calendar."

Member Nathan Marshall: "I will second."

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

Swearing in of New Board Members

We celebrated the swearing-in of two new Board Members, Ms. Mickelle Bos and Mr. Brandon Johnson. Dr. Richard Nye was in attendance to assist with the ceremony. Mr. Adam Gerlach was excused from the swearing-in due to a family matter. The occasion was marked by enthusiasm and anticipation as we welcomed our new Board Members and looked forward to the important work ahead.

Executive Director Report

During the Executive Director's Report, Stacey Hutchings provided an overview of the Board and committee meeting schedule for the coming year, introduced the staff team's goals and priorities, shared updates on stakeholder collaboration efforts, and highlighted recent successes and celebrations from charter schools across the state.

Report: Charter School Opportunities Report with Dr. Jamie Garwood

Dr. Jamie Garwood shared an assessment of charter school opportunities throughout Utah, drawing on demographic, academic, enrollment, and geographic trends to identify areas where educational options may be limited. The presentation highlighted communities that could benefit from additional charter school access and provided insights to help guide future planning, growth strategies, and authorizing decisions..

Report: Start Up Grant Funding Update

Lisa Cooper-Look, a member of the SCSB team, provided an update on available start-up funding and support opportunities for charter schools. Her presentation outlined current grant initiatives, funding priorities, and resources designed to assist schools in planning, launching, and expanding their programs. She also discussed how these funding opportunities may contribute to the continued growth and success of Utah's charter school sector.

Information & Discussion: Charter School Education Service Agency & Literacy Coach Funding

Board Member Nathan Marshall presented information on the Charter School Education Service Agency and its role in supporting Utah charter schools. SCSB staff member Lincoln Fillmore provided an update on Literacy Coach Funding, including available resources and ongoing efforts to strengthen literacy outcomes. Following both presentations, Board members engaged in discussion and had the opportunity to ask questions and share feedback regarding the information presented. The board voted to make a special board meeting for this items.

SCSB Committees

Board Committee Reports as Needed

Board committees provided reports to the Board, with representatives from each committee sharing updates on the work they had completed over the past month as well as priorities and goals for the coming months. The updates reflected ongoing efforts to support governance, strengthen oversight, and advance key initiatives aligned with the Board's mission.

Discussion & Action Item: Small School Expansion Applications

The Board reviewed six Small School Expansion applications submitted by charter schools seeking growth opportunities. Representatives from each applicant school presented their request and met individually with the Board to discuss their proposed expansion plans and answer questions. Following the completion of all six presentations and discussions, the Board deliberated and voted on each application. As a reminder, a Small School Expansion allows for an increase of up to 100 student seats and/or one additional grade level. The applications reflected continued interest among Utah charter schools in expanding educational opportunities for students and families.

- **Freedom Preparatory Academy St. George – Adding 7th Grade**

Member Nathan Marshall: "I make a motion to approve the formal expansion at the grade level of 7th with no additional students"

Member Susan Pulsipher: "I second"

All members present say "Aye." Motion passed unanimously

- **DaVinci Academy of Science and the Arts – Adding 100 Students**

Member Brandon Johnson: "I move that we approve DaVinci's Academy's application to add 100 additional students."

Member Mickelle Bos: "I will second that."

All members present say "Aye." Motion passed unanimously

- **NUAMES – Adding 100 Students**

Member Mickelle Bos: "I will make a motion to approve NUAMES and raise their cap to 1450 also understanding it is 9 through 12."

Member Brandon Johnson: "I second."

All members present say "Aye." Motion passed unanimously

- **Treeside Charter School – Adding 7th grade**
Vice Chair Clint Biesinger and Member Brandon Johnson have abstained from voting.
Member Nathan Marshall: "I will motion to approve the adding of 7th grade to Treeside incorporating the 60 students they are already approved for."

Member Susan Pulsipher: "I second."

All members present say "Aye." Motion passed unanimously

- **Utah Connections Academy – Adding 100 Students**
Member Mickelle Bos: "I'll make a motion to approve Utah Connection Academy."

Member Brandon Johnson: "I second that."

All members present say "Aye." Motion passed unanimously

- **Leadership Academy of Utah – Adding 100 Students**
Member Brandon Johnson: "I move that we approve the additional 100 students for Leadership Academy of Utah."

Member Nathan Marshall: "an enthusiastic second"

All members present say "Aye." Motion passed unanimously

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