

MINUTES OF THE UTAH STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Thursday, September 10, 2026

250 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, UT

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Members Present:

- Chair Stephanie Speicher
- 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:

- Rod Hall, USBE Liaison
- Darin Goff, Assistant Attorney General (virtually)

(8:00 AM) MEETING BEGINS

Consent Calendar

The Board reviewed the consent calendar, which included draft minutes from the August Board Meeting, the June financial report, the articulation agreement between Itineris Early College High School and ThrivePoint Academy, Wallace Stegner Academy's request for a new school identification number for its high school, and charter agreements for Itineris Early College High School, ThrivePoint Academy, and Vista School.

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

Member Nathan Marshall: "I second."

All members present say "Aye."

Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion & Action Item: Monticello Academy Small Expansion Application

The Board heard a presentation from Monticello Academy regarding its Small School Expansion Application. Representatives from the school outlined their request and engaged with Board members in discussion regarding enrollment growth, capacity, and future plans. As a reminder, a small school expansion allows for up to 100 additional student seats and/or one additional grade level. Following discussion, the Board considered the application for action.

Member Nathan Marshall: "I move to approve the Monticello Academy Small Expansion Application."

Member Brandon Johnson: "I second."

All members present say "Aye."

Motion passed unanimously.

Charter Proposal Review and Action

The Board conducted capacity interviews for twelve charter proposal applicants. Following each presentation and discussion, the Board voted on whether to invite the proposal team to submit a full charter application.

Group 1: Charter Proposal Applications**Theodore Roosevelt Military Academy**

The Board discussed the proposal, including enrollment projections, facilities, academic programming, and the proposed hub-and-spoke model. Board members expressed support for the concept while encouraging additional detail regarding facilities, sustainability, and academic programming.

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger: "I would make a motion we approve Theodore Roosevelt Military Academy and move them through to a full application."

Member Brandon Johnson: "I second."

Roll Call Vote:

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger – Yes

Member Brandon Johnson – Yes

Member Mickelle Bos – Yes

Member Adam Gerlach – Yes

Member Nathan Marshall – Yes

Member Susan Pulsipher – Yes

Chair Stephanie Speicher – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Great Hearts Utah

Board members discussed community demand, governance structure, local representation, enrollment projections, and the Great Hearts educational model.

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger: "I make a motion to approve Great Hearts Utah to move forward to full application."

Member Nathan Marshall: "I second."

Roll Call Vote:

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger – Yes
Member Nathan Marshall – Yes
Member Adam Gerlach – Yes
Member Susan Pulsipher – Yes
Member Brandon Johnson – No
Member Mickelle Bos – Yes
Chair Stephanie Speicher – Yes
Motion passed (6-1).

Compass Point Academy

The Board reviewed the Montessori-based proposal and discussed enrollment projections, facilities, Montessori-trained staff, and the proposed growth model. Applicants clarified that enrollment projections had been reduced significantly from the original submission.

Member Brandon Johnson: "I move that we request Compass Point Academy submit a full application."

Member Nathan Marshall: "I second."

Roll Call Vote:

Member Brandon Johnson – Yes
Member Nathan Marshall – Yes
Member Adam Gerlach – Yes
Member Susan Pulsipher – Yes
Vice Chair Clint Biesinger – Yes
Member Mickelle Bos – Yes
Chair Stephanie Speicher – Yes
Motion passed unanimously.

Group 2: Charter Proposal Applications

Juniper Grove Academy

The Board discussed concerns regarding the hybrid elementary model, enrollment viability, literacy goals, parent responsibilities, and financial sustainability. Members expressed appreciation for the concept while encouraging additional development before moving forward.

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger: "I move that Juniper Grove Academy be invited to return next year with a more developed proposal and not move forward to a full application at this time."

Member Susan Pulsipher: "I second."

Roll Call Vote:

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger – Yes
Member Susan Pulsipher – Yes
Member Nathan Marshall – Yes
Member Adam Gerlach – Yes
Member Brandon Johnson – No
Member Mickelle Bos – Yes
Chair Stephanie Speicher – Yes
Motion passed. Proposal not advanced; applicant invited to return in a future cycle.

Momentum Academy

The Board discussed the AI-supported personalized learning model, mental health supports, location, enrollment concerns, accreditation, and transcript implications. Members expressed interest in the concept while requesting additional development before advancement.

Member Susan Pulsipher: "I move that Momentum Academy be invited to return next year with additional refinement and not move forward at this time."

Member Adam Gerlach: "I second."

Roll Call Vote:

Member Susan Pulsipher – Yes

Member Adam Gerlach – Yes

Member Nathan Marshall – Yes

Member Brandon Johnson – Yes

Member Mickelle Bos – Yes

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger – Yes

Motion passed unanimously. Proposal not advanced; applicant invited to return next year.

Philip Fox Academy of Learning (PAL)

The Board discussed the proposed two-pathway educational model, individualized learning plans, enrollment strategy, facilities, and academic structure. Members requested additional detail but expressed interest in learning more through the full application process.

Member Brandon Johnson: "I move that Philip Fox Academy submit a full application."

Member Nathan Marshall: "I second."

Roll Call Vote:

Member Brandon Johnson – Yes

Member Mickelle Bos – Yes

Member Adam Gerlach – No

Member Nathan Marshall – Yes

Member Susan Pulsipher – No

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger – Yes

Motion passed (4-2).

Group 3: Charter Proposal Applications

Builder Academy of Utah

The Board discussed the proposed construction-focused CTE program, apprenticeship opportunities, enrollment projections, facilities, and long-term financial sustainability. Members encouraged further refinement before advancement.

Member Susan Pulsipher: "I move that Builder Academy be invited to return next year with additional detail and not move forward at this time."

Member Nathan Marshall: "I second."

Roll Call Vote:

Member Susan Pulsipher – Yes

Member Nathan Marshall – Yes

Member Adam Gerlach – Yes

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger – No

Member Brandon Johnson – Yes

Member Mickelle Bos – Yes

Chair Stephanie Speicher – Yes

Motion passed. Proposal not advanced; applicant invited to return next year.

Peak Mastery Charter School

The Board discussed the hybrid educational model, mastery-based learning, coaching relationships, enrollment assumptions, and instructional delivery. Members were divided but ultimately agreed to allow the proposal to move forward.

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger: "I move that Peak Mastery Charter School move forward to full application."

Member Mickelle Bos: "I second."

Roll Call Vote:

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger – Yes

Member Mickelle Bos – Yes

Member Brandon Johnson – Yes

Member Adam Gerlach – No

Member Nathan Marshall – No

Member Susan Pulsipher – No

Chair Stephanie Speicher – Yes

Motion passed (4-3).

Keystone Academy of the Arts

The Board discussed the classical education model, arts integration, practicums, enrollment assumptions, articulation agreement with Thomas Edison Charter School, and long-term sustainability.

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger: "I move that Keystone Academy of the Arts move forward to full application."

Member Susan Pulsipher: "I second."

Roll Call Vote:

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger – Yes

Member Susan Pulsipher – Yes

Member Nathan Marshall – Yes

Member Adam Gerlach – Yes

Member Brandon Johnson – Yes

Member Mickelle Bos – Yes

Chair Stephanie Speicher – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Group 4: Charter Proposal Applications

Spectrum Academy St. George

The Board reviewed the proposal to establish a specialized Spectrum Academy campus in St. George serving students with autism and other neurodiverse learning needs. Discussion included governance, funding, staffing, and demonstrated success of the Spectrum model.

Member Adam Gerlach: "I move that Spectrum Academy St. George move forward to full application."

Member Mickelle Bos: "I second."

Roll Call Vote:

Member Adam Gerlach – Yes
Member Mickelle Bos – Yes
Member Brandon Johnson – Yes
Vice Chair Clint Biesinger – Yes
Member Susan Pulsipher – Yes
Member Nathan Marshall – Yes
Chair Stephanie Speicher – Yes
Motion passed unanimously.

Azure Fields High School

After discussion regarding enrollment, funding, location, and prior approval status, the Board voted not to advance the new application and encouraged the school to continue focusing on the previously approved proposal.

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger: "I move that Azure Fields High School not move forward to full application."
[transcript | Word]

Member Adam Gerlach: "I second."

Roll Call Vote:

All members present voted Yes.

Motion passed unanimously. Proposal not advanced.

Star Lotus Academy

The Board discussed the Waldorf educational model, enrollment projections, competition within the market, facilities, and demand analysis. Members encouraged further market research before moving forward.

Member Susan Pulsipher: "I move that Star Lotus Academy not move forward at this time and return next year with additional market analysis."

Member Adam Gerlach: "I second."

Roll Call Vote:

Member Susan Pulsipher – Yes

Member Adam Gerlach – Yes

Vice Chair Clint Biesinger – Yes

Member Mickelle Bos – Yes

Chair Stephanie Speicher – Yes

Member Nathan Marshall – No

Member Brandon Johnson – No

Motion passed (5-2). Proposal not advanced; applicant invited to return.

Committee Reports

Due to time constraints, Board Committee Reports were deferred. Committee chairs were asked to submit written updates to be distributed to Board members electronically.

Adjournment

Chair Stephanie Speicher thanked Board Members, applicants, staff, and stakeholders for their dedication and service.

(Approximately 5:16 PM) ADJOURN

