

MINUTES OF THE
UTAH STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Thursday, May 11, 2023

USBE Board Rooms and Basement West
250 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84111
www.youtube.com/utahscsb

Members Present:

Chair Bryan Bowles
Vice Chair Cynthia Phillips
Member Krystle Bassett
Member Stephanie Speicher
Member Erik Olson
Member Rabecca Cisneros

Staff Present:

Jennifer Lambert, Director SCSB
Liz Bunker
Joanne Castillo
Lisa Cooper-Loock
William Evans
Marie Steffensen

Others Present:

AAG Kevin Olsen
USBE Deputy Superintendent Scott Jones
USBE Deputy Superintendent Angie Stallings
USBE Liaison Joseph Kerry

MEETING BEGINS (10:07 AM)

Chair Bowles welcomed AAG Kevin Olsen, USBE Deputy Superintendent Angie Stallings, and USBE Liaison Joseph Kerry.

Member Bassett led the pledge.

Public Comment

No public comment

Chair Bowles stated the Mission of the Board.

Board Member Thought (10:09 AM)– Member Stephanie Speicher

Member Speicher spoke on the value of wonder. After sharing a clip of a duck hatching, Member Speicher spoke on how wonder, awe, and curiosity needed to be the center of the classrooms Utah students learn in. Citing UC Berkeley’s Dacher Keltner’s research on the physiological and cognitive effects of awe, Member Speicher drew the line between awe and connectedness in the classroom.

Board Chair Report (10:16 AM)

Chair Bowles welcomed USBE Deputy Superintendent Scott Jones to the table before introducing the October 23 – 26 dates for NACSA 2023 should any Board Member wish to attend. Chair Bowles excused Member Smith from the day’s meeting before passing around opportunities for Members to attend graduation ceremonies for the schools the SCSB authorizes.

Executive Director Report (10:18 AM)

Director Lambert updated the Members on the Required Policies Campaign, specifically the changes made to the focus of the Campaign and the supports necessary to make the goal possible. The new process included scrapping the assurance survey portion of the campaign. Director Lambert introduced the theme for the Second Annual SCSB Art Contest, deadline, and to whom the contest is open. Director Lambert then reported on a First-In-the-Nation program Monticello Academy has created in partnership with a third party to offer their teachers monies that can be used towards a vacation. Director Lambert next highlighted DaVinci Academy’s trip to the National Academic Decathlon and named students who were recognized at the Championship. Two of Vista School’s teachers were awarded the STEM Awards for Engineering Educators of the Year. Director Lambert celebrated the addition of new schools that were given the Purple Star Designation. Finally, Director Lambert congratulated the team from Mountain Heights Academy who participated in an international STEM competition for the awards they won there.

Consent Calendar (10:31 AM)

Vice Chair Phillips claimed a conflict of interest as a basis for pulling an item from the Consent Calendar.

Vice Chair Phillips: “I’d like to move that we pull the recommendations of the Charter School Revolving Loan Committee from the Consent Agenda.”

Member Cisneros: “I’ll second.”

No Discussion.

Motion passes unanimously.

Member Olson: “I’ll move that we approve the remaining items on the Consent Calendar.”

Member Bassett: “I will second that.”

No Discussion

Motion passes unanimously.

Member Cisneros indicated that she would be abstaining as an employee of the school addressed in the Revolving Loan.

Member Bassett: "I move to endorse the Revolving Loan Committee Recommendations for FY 2024 as outlined."

Member Speicher: "I second that."

No Discussion

Motion passes unanimously.

Annual School Land Trust Presentation (10:35 AM)

USBE's Elisse Newey gave her annual presentation on the School Land Trust and included how charter schools benefitted from participating, who the individual charter schools could use as their council for deciding how to use the School Land Trust distributions, when the distribution will go out, and how the process for charter schools were changing. After the presentation, Deputy Superintendent Stallings indicated that Elisse would be moving to USBE's policy department.

School Readiness to Open Review (10:47 AM)

School Support Specialist Marie Steffensen presented the readiness to open review for John Hancock's Eagle Mountain Campus. She reminded the Members of the impact of their decision in this matter in relation to the school receiving State funds. Ms. Steffensen also relayed the background of this campus and the status of the items on the checklist. After the presentation, Ms. Steffensen offered staff's recommendation and provided a possible motion.

Chair Bowles invited USBE Deputy Superintendent Scott Jones to add to the conversation. Deputy Superintendent Jones confirmed the first day of school as August 15 and requested the SSID numbers for that August 15 count to verify the numbers to be presented to USBE. Deputy Superintendent Jones indicated that the numbers were needed to help their Common Data Committee understand how they might need to change their method for projecting anticipated numbers of students. He then explained how the USBE came up with the set-aside monies.

Member Speicher: "I move to certify that John Hancock has met the requirements of the Readiness to Open Review and direct staff to notify the Superintendent through our current process."

Member Olson: "I'll second that motion."

Discussion:

Member Cisneros introduced discussion regarding a possible recusal from the discussion and vote on this item. Vice Chair Phillips stated that she did not vote on the Revolving Loan item on the Consent Calendar and would not be voting on this item involving John Hancock.

Motion passes unanimously.

Procedure Policy (10:57 AM)

AAG Olsen identified how the passage of SB65 would affect the SCSB's procedures policy. He focused on the lack of an SCSB policy for procedure in the event of an emergency. He referenced the Rule Making Act in suggesting language for the existing SCSB policy. AAG Olsen then defined what constituted an exigent circumstance, what needed to be done, and the limits of the term. Chair Bowles clarified the impact of this motion and where in the adoption continuum this motion sat.

Member Bassett: "I move to publish notice of the Amended Procedures Policy along with the action summary and analysis of the proposed amendments on the Board's webpage for 30 days and to put the amended policy with any public comments on the Board's August Meeting Consent Calendar."

Member Speicher: "I'll second."

No discussion.

Motion passes unanimously.

RECESS (11:04)

MEETING RESUMES (11:29 AM)

Working Lunch – STRATEGIC PLAN (11:29 AM)

Vice Chair Phillips gave a brief history of the strategic plan, its current successes, and the impetus for the current conversation which included continued movement towards an MOU with USBE. Vice Chair Phillips spoke on evergreen charters, parental choice, and legislative intent. Vice Chair Phillips spoke on the effects of focusing on compliance before identifying things the Board has cared about. Vice Chair Phillips spoke on the bilateral nature of the charter agreements and on the criticism she has heard from others against the SCSB. Vice Chair Phillips spoke on the relationship between the SCSB and the USBE. Vice Chair Phillips spoke about a previous staff remediation process and on how the focus on compliance misdirected Staff resources from focusing on Utah's unique factor of the presumption of keeping a school open and successful. Vice Chair Phillips posed a hypothetical scenario and asked what would make schools choose the SCSB as an authorizer. Vice Chair Phillips asked that the Board give staff high-level direction and suggested that the Board act as though the SCSB was in a highly-

competitive authorizing environment. Vice Chair Phillips asked that the members consider a hypothetical motion focusing on a program centered on the bilateral agreement between the SCSB and its schools. Vice Chair Phillips identified specific considerations in her hypothetical motion and proposed a hypothetical motion addressing remediation. Vice Chair Phillips suggested that the Board should list their priorities in terms of the allocation of resources for staff. USBE Liaison Kerry commented on the decorum of the SCSB and initiated conversation on the mimicry Vice Chair Phillips perceived of the USBE in the SCSB. Member Cisneros agreed that the question posed regarding whether or not schools would pay to be part of the SCSB portfolio was necessary, and the reminder that where an organization puts its time and money was demonstrates what they value was welcome. Member Cisneros identified herself as an advocate of parent choice and introduced conversation regarding the public expectation of minimum standards for the public funds that charter schools receive. Member Cisneros sought clarification if the SCSB, as Legislatively-appointed gatekeepers of public funds, are gatekeepers one time in reference to Vice Chair Phillips' suggested legislative intent of the establishment of evergreen charter, and who would then be responsible for perpetual funds. Chair Bowles continued conversation using the mission and vision of the SCSB to define the charges of an authorizer. Vice Chair Phillips asked that the Members consider different paradigms, specifically pertaining to what staff is to do when a school does not reach a Board-decided based on the bilateral charter agreement and what claims the school might have on support in the process. Chair Bowles presented the paradox the Board is challenged with and suggested that the Members consider if there are consistent measures that can be used without painting all schools with the same brush. School Support Coordinator William Evans clarified that the remediation process staff uses does not lend itself well on the academic side as opposed to the performance side. Vice Chair Phillips commented on the duplication of processes that are being done in both USBE and SCSB and introduced conversations on the definition of roles between the two with respect to the bilateral charter agreement. Vice Chair Phillips asked that the Members give staff clear directives to staff on how to manage the balance that Chair Bowles described. Member Olson recognized that Vice Chair Phillips making rhetorical statements and factual statements, but he articulated that he could not identify which statements were rhetorical and which were factual. Member Olson requested details and examples of staff not knowing the priorities of the Board. Member Olson asked to hear examples from staff, questioned the reality of the ambiguity described, and if that lack of directive affected staff in case-by-case issues or if they colored staff action as a whole. Director Lambert spoke on what staff assumed they understood versus what Vice Chair Phillips stated. Director Lambert asked that the Board give staff direction if they wanted the staff to focus on other things. Regarding individual situations, Director Lambert indicated that staff does find it a little more difficult to navigate, and staff uses the vision, mission, and values to direct their actions. Director Lambert spoke on what staff has done in working with USBE in defining what each entity does in the interest of minimizing the duplication of work. Director Lambert spoke on the changes made in the remediation process that precipitated from the discussions with USBE. If there were differences between staff's current direction and where the Board wanted staff to focus, Director Lambert noted that staff would appreciate notification and delineation of the change of focus. Member Olson contrasted his perspective of the Board's relationship with staff with the perspective Vice Chair Phillips

offered, and he introduced conversation on whether or not the perceived disconnect between the Board and staff really needed to be addressed. Director Lambert presented her perspective. Vice Chair Phillips restated the nature of her criticisms. Member Bassett shared her perspective on the Board's relationship with staff and how the Board's Mission and Vision have been her North Star since her early days on the Board when it comes to voting. Member Bassett contrasted her perspective on the Strategic Plan with how the expanded Mission and Vision has affected her. Member Speicher identified the difficulties this Board faces from her perspective. Member Speicher introduced conversation on the subject of choice and continued to elaborate on what supporting staff looked like to her. School Remediation Specialist Liz Bunker gave a brief overview of the changes made to the remediation process since meeting with the consultants in September 2022. Vice Chair Phillips reiterated a request that the Board and Staff consider a paradigm shift. Chair Bowles indicated that the Strategic Plan would probably be revisited in the next fiscal year. Member Speicher suggested that Board Members speak with schools at June's baseball game and summer conferences for their input on SCSB priorities. Chair Bowles asked that the dates of the summer conferences be emailed to the Board Members.

Member Olson: "I move that we adjourn."

MEETING ENDS (12:15 PM)