



Charter Connection

October 2020

YOUR MONTHLY UPDATE FOR ALL THINGS CHARTER

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Director's Message



You have made it to October. Congratulations are in order!

We appreciate all of you for getting your projections submitted on-time this year. It truly makes a big difference towards helping your funding happen as smoothly as possible.

In our last board meeting, Stephanie Speicher was sworn in as the newest member of the State Charter school Board. We've included a photo and short biography below to help you get-to-know. Please help us in welcoming her!

-- *Jennifer*

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Get to Know: Stephanie Speicher—Newest SCSB Member



Dr. Stephanie Speicher's diverse teaching and professional experience provide her a unique skillset to guide and support the success of Utah charter schools. Stephanie holds a defined skillset built and strengthened over time in varied settings with a concentration on school leadership, authentic curriculum design, and community relations. Serving in positions, such as a charter school administrator, leadership mentor, collegiate faculty member, and social studies educator, have enabled her to build a broad professional foundation. As a member of the SCSB, Stephanie aims to bridge multiple facets of the Utah education community together to sustain the momentum of powerful educative experiences across the state. She currently is an assistant professor of teacher education at Weber State University. Her research interests include preservice teacher agency development and the implementation of learning communities in the classroom. Personally, living in Utah enriches her desire to be in nature, where she can boundlessly recreate with her family.

Dear Dr. Ed,

I am feeling lost. Between waivers and quarantines and school operating plans I am just not sure what I need to be doing any more. How do I know what our school is accountable for this year?

Sincerely, Not Accountable?

Dear Not Accountable,

Let's start with this: Take a deep breath and pat yourself on the back for getting this far. You have responded to a difficult situation. That is no small task. But, an educator's work is never done.... Do not forget that the leniency that was given at the end of last year was an emergency situation, due to a novel pandemic. Although the pandemic has not "gone away", as was hoped for, we have found ways to continue to educate students. Time was given and plans were created so that schools could be prepared to operate.

Parents were also given full information as to program offerings and choices at their school. They could select to continue going to the school they had been enrolled in and adhere to the plan that that school had put forth

or they could select to go to another school.

Therefore, accountability measures should be in place and followed as they normally would be. The pandemic is not an excuse for lack of accountability in SY2021.

If students are not meeting the expectations for participation in the school day, then appropriate school discipline should be carried out. The Utah core standards are required, and therefore must be taught. It may look different, or not be taught in a traditional way, but all courses with standards, including: music, computers, dance, social studies, science, or drama, etc... must be included in the school day for all students. Summative assessments and benchmark tests should be planned on and taken seriously. School goals should be rigorous and help you strive to continue to improve as a school.

Your operation still drives your enrollment, which drives your funding, which drives your operation. You can do it. Your teachers can do it. Your community can do it.

The pandemic is not an excuse for lack of accountability in SY2021.

Go be awesome.

—*Dr. Ed U. Tation*

Theme of the Month

The COVID-19 pandemic has made most of us more reliant on technology to connect with the world than ever before. Still, communication is much more than the transmission of sounds, images, or data bytes through a medium to a receiver. Communication is a symbolic process for creating shared meaning, or in other words, it is about relating. In H.D. Duncan's (1967) research on the sociology of communication, he profoundly wrote, "we do not relate and then talk, but relate in talk." Learning to communicate effectively is learning how the messages that people exchange affects the relationships between them.

So, how do charter schools promote better communication? It isn't enough to have a contact number on the school's website or claim to have an open-door policy. While those are a must, most people see those as lip-service. The first step is to stop assuming. Just as being a good communicator does not make one a good educator, one should not assume that being an educator makes one a good communicator. The second step in building trust is to move from impersonal communication to interpersonal communication. Recognize that you are trying to connect with real people who have real feelings, thoughts, and beliefs. The third step is to keep the dialogue open and ongoing. Communication breaks down when either party suspects the other of being disingenuous. It's been my experience that most conflicts follow a breakdown in communication—that is not to say that communication can avert all conflicts, but it is key to reaching equitable resolutions when they do occur. Parents, students, faculty, and staff must feel safe enough to express their concerns directly with school administration and feel genuinely heard when they do.

Duncan, H. D. (1967). The search for a social theory of communication in American sociology. In F. Dance (Ed.), Human communication theory. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Opportunities for Schools

- Has your charter school governing board done its annual training on the Open and Public Meetings Act yet? The [Office of the State Auditor has a training for you](#)
- Work with an awesome charter school colleague at a SCSB authorized school? Nominate them for Employee of the Month at <https://forms.gle/dtEGG9EdnGkjrHP7A>
- Looking for resources concerning the coronavirus? <https://schools.utah.gov/coronavirus>
- Mentoring trainings are available at <https://www.utahscsb.org/mentoring>. Contact Marie.Steffensen@schools.utah.gov for more information.



Outstanding in Our Field

- Congratulations to the following charter schools who had students qualify as National Merit Semifinalists! AMES-4, Karl G. Maeser-3, NUAMES-1, Providence Hall-1, SUCCESS Academy Cedar City-1, UCAS-1
- Congratulations to AMES for being recognized a 2020 National ESEA Distinguished School in Category 1: Outstanding Academic Achievement. Way to go!!
- Congratulations to Deep Chakraborty, a then 3rd grade student of Thomas Edison Charter School for placing 4th in the state and 15th in the nation in the Kangaroo to Math competition this summer!

October 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			<u>USBE Meeting</u> 1	<u>USBE Committees</u> 2	3	4
5	6	7	<u>SCSB Meeting</u> 8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						1
2	3	4	<u>USBE Meeting</u> 5	<u>USBE Committee</u> 6	7	8
<u>Charter Directors</u> 9	10	11	<u>SCSB Meeting</u> 12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						