



CHARTER CONNECTION

February 2021

YOUR MONTHLY UPDATE FOR ALL THINGS CHARTER

[Table of Contents](#)

Director's Message

Birds are singing, the sun is shining, and legislative session is winding down. It must be March ☺. We hope to see you at Monday, March 8th's Director's Meeting.

In recent months, a few of our schools have faced some public challenges regarding equity and diversity. There are strong feelings on all sides of this and sometimes schools get put in the middle. I hope we all can solidly land on the side of the student and rise above political disagreements and focus on creating a safe and welcoming space for all students to learn and succeed. With this in mind, the State Charter School Board approved a "Resolution in Support of All Utah Students." This resolution makes clear the "commitment to upholding the public trust by respecting the individuality and dignity of each student." This is a resolution I know we can all get behind. Read it at <https://utahscsb.org/resolutions>

As you (hopefully) know, the State Charter School Board typically meets the second Thursday of the month, but will be meeting this Thursday, March 4th at 10 AM instead. The YouTube stream and meeting materials can be accessed at <https://www.utahscsb.org/march-2021>.

— *Jennifer*

[Director's Message](#)

[Spotlight](#)

[Dear Dr. Ed](#)

[Themes of the Month](#)

[Opportunities for Schools](#)

[Outstanding in Our Field](#)

[March \(2021\)](#)

[April \(2021\)](#)

SPOTLIGHT: VOYAGE ACADEMY

The State Charter School Board recognizes Voyage Academy for its outstanding financial metrics and exceptional enrollment trend over the years. For FY2020, their Debt to Asset ratio is below 1 and their Current Ratio is 2.31. The school also has a large amount of unrestricted cash reserves and days cash on hand.

Voyage Academy has a workplace environment of mutual trust and respect and the staffs appreciate each other's work, when possible. This leads to high staff retention rate with more cross-training opportunities to climb the leadership ladder. Voyage Academy works hard to build relationships and believe that they are successful because of the outstanding connections built amongst the people, the students, the staff, and the parents. Such positive relationships encourage students' motivation and engagement in learning.

Congratulations Voyage Academy!!



Dear Dr. Ed,
With all the conversation recently about equity and inclusion, I would like to create a more diverse and inclusive environment at my school. What should I consider in getting started?

Sincerely, Starting

Dear Starting,
It is easy, when seeing the phrase “intentional diversity” to go directly to the word “diversity.” But it is the “intentional.” part that must have equal or perhaps even greater weight as one goes about creating an intentionally diverse school. The first step is recognizing that almost everything about running an intentionally diverse school requires working from an original template—how you recruit families, what your curriculum looks like, and how you create a culture that not only welcomes diversity but nurtures its growth and expression.

The second step is giving constant attention to balance. School administrators must pay constant attention to access for all, including ensuring all students have a level playing field in terms of academic resources and ability to participate in school life.

The third is that families are as much a part of school life as students and must be integrated into the school. Their participation and their willingness to help create the diverse, engaged community school are critical. While certainly families are always a critical part of a school’s success, in the case of an intentionally diverse school, those families will be from vastly different backgrounds with a range of goals and desires for their children’s academic lives.

With all those challenges, why attempt such a venture? The opportunity to nurture a culture of acceptance and appreciation for difference in the generation coming up is worth it. That will enable us as a society to advance equity for all.

See the full report at: <https://www.newschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Creating-an-Intentionally-Diverse-School-Lessons-Learned.pdf>

—*Dr. Ed U. Cation*

THEME OF THE MONTH

“Public Service is a noble calling, and we need men and women of character to believe that they can make a difference in their communities, in their states and in their country.” (George H.W. Bush, 41st President of the United States)

This inscription is found inscribed on a plaque below the bust of President George H.W. Bush as you walk into the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A and M. Students often in jest will cite sarcastically the words “public service is a noble calling” when the stress of all that is expected of them gets to be too high. This sarcastic citation is often met it laughs and grumbles of acquiescence from other burdened students who have congregated into the small library to burn the midnight oil and offer up sacrifices to whatever god of tests and homework will give reprieve.

However, as a graduate from the program I can attest that those same students truly believe that public service is a noble calling. Upon graduation many who had answered this noble calling by having served their government previously in a myriad of different sectors, again elected to forgo the high pay and benefits of the private sector to serve their fellow countrymen in public service positions across the United States, in local, state, and federal government.

Like sleep deprived and test anxious students, I am sure that our Utah teachers often, if not in these words but their own, exclaim in sarcastic tones, “Public service is [indeed] a noble calling”. Pay for teachers is no wear near the pay found in the private sector, students and bureaucracy can be challenging and COVID-19 should have gone away a year ago by now. This being said, I am sure, like my fellow classmates, these teachers too believe with all their hearts that public services is truly a noble calling. These teachers are men and women of character who believe they are making a difference in their communities, states and country. They are shaping the leaders, the inventors, the explorers, the artists, the medical professionals, the protectors, the advocates, the judges, and lastly the future teachers of our world. They have sacrificed other professions and opportunities to teach because they too have felt their calling lies in the service of teaching and educating.

As we all serve each other in our public service callings may we commit to be noble in all we do. May we serve students and our communities both local and abroad justly. May administer the business or education of the public to the best of our abilities. May we be just and transparent with the power and authority the public has vested in us and may we remember that it is a privilege to serve our fellow men and women even during our most trying times.

Public service is a noble calling.

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](#)
- Pluralsight One, with USBE, is offering grant licenses to LEAs to provide course training for computer science, business, and technology. If interested, email amber.hellstrom@schools.utah.gov with the subject Pluralsight license, name of LEA, and emails of those needing license
- Work with an awesome charter school colleague at a SCSB authorized school? Nominate them for Employee of the Month at <https://forms.gle/dtEGG9EdnGkirHP7A>
- 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 Meghan Peacock of Dixie Montessori Academy for being recognized as February 2021's Employee of the Month of SCSB Authorized Schools. Meghan is natural teacher who has a gift of presenting information to her students in a way that is concrete, meaningful, and lets students own their own learning
- Better Days 2020 held a "She Started It" contest and Lieutenant Governor Henderson announced the winners in this video. There were a couple of charter students from AAI, Renaissance and Edith Bowen who placed. <https://youtube.com/watch?v=8uWoc4FsP34>
- Congratulations to the Academy for Math, Engineering & Science (AMES) for being recognized as an ESSA Distinguished School for Academic Excellence for 2020-21 <https://eseanetwork.org/ds>

March 2021

1	2	3	SCSB Meeting 4	5	6	7
Director's Meeting 8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 2021

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