



Charter Connection

September 2019

YOUR MONTHLY UPDATE FOR ALL THINGS CHARTER

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Director's Message

The closing of AISU has had ripple effects to Utah's charter landscape. Critics of charter schools are taking this opportunity to point out what they feel are shortcomings of charter schools. While it is sad to have a school closed and never easy for those involved, a strength of charter schools is that they can close when needed.

As we all know, the AISU situation was not typical. The organizational and financial structures created extra complications, risk, and eventually serious problems. However, where there were some unique aspects to this situation, there are also some important lessons all charter schools should learn from it. We will be sharing those lessons with you in these newsletters and in Charter Directors meetings, starting with this coming Directors meeting (September 9th at 12:30 PM). All the information in our Directors meeting is important, but of special note will be the SPED Program Accounting presentation. This presentation is designed to help schools not make the mistakes we have seen cause some schools (including AISU), financial problems. We know you are all doing many great things and we hope to help you avoid potential pitfalls that could interfere with those great things. We hope to see you at our next meeting. Also, please feel free to reach out if you have questions or would like extra support. —*Jennifer*

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Meet SCSB Authorizing & School Support Specialist Marie Steffensen:



Ms. Steffensen is the specialist for authorizing and school support with the State Charter School Board (SCSB); which means that she is charged with guiding prospective schools through the proposal process, as well as providing support for Utah's charter schools. Ms. Steffensen earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Utah and began her teaching career at a brand-new charter school. After teaching for six years, she moved into coaching and administrative roles, and assisted in opening an expansion of a charter school. She earned her graduate degree from Western Governors University, and went on to open another charter school, this time as the executive director. She is deeply committed to helping schools succeed and cannot wait to bring her passion to the entire SCSB community. When she's not opening or supporting schools, she loves to spend time with her husband, Brian, their two kids, and their sweet old dog, Jazmine. Together they love to travel, listen to podcasts, and laugh.

Marie.Steffensen@schools.utah.gov —801-538-7990.

Dear Dr. Ed,

This week has been horrible. I have had a series of tough days. I failed to communicate effectively with parents. I failed to file a report correctly and had to rewrite the entire thing. I failed to check in with my teachers who need additional support because I was preoccupied with student discipline. I failed when teachers came for support. I had no good strategies to share. I failed at celebrating success at our team meeting. I even failed at eating lunch most days. I just feel miserable. I've been an educator for two-decades—this isn't supposed to happen. Help!!

Sincerely,

Am I Failing?

Dear Am I Failing?

Short answer: No! Funny how we educators don't seem to approach failure in the same way in which we encourage our students. We teach our students to learn from failure—no matter how long they have been a student. We claim, "mistakes are proof you are trying," and that "failure is a stepping-stone to success." But the trouble is, it doesn't feel that way.

In fact, it feels pretty miserable. The truth is there will be good and bad days, even for the best. Instead of feeling embarrassed and trying to hide our "failures" (like we so dearly yearn to do), what if we addressed them head on? Here are some ways we can make it through tough days on the job and learn from our mistakes:

- **Reflect**

Take some time to think deeply about what happened: write about it, share it with a colleague, or just turn it over in your mind.

- **Make a Plan**

But don't just ruminate or stress-plan. Write a simple list of three ways you could avoid making the same mistake again.

- **Find Support**

Share your list with someone you can rely on to hold you accountable for your plan.

- **Try It Out, But Be Gentle with Yourself**

We are often our own worst critics. Don't let the heavy feeling drown out the daily quiet triumphs. Challenge yourself to think of two bright spots every day.

- **Be Real**

By sharing our struggles and this attitude toward failure with our colleagues, we show true leadership and help build relationships.

Let's face it: Every day in which we interact with students, there are bound to be errors, missteps, and flat out failures. And it can feel bad. But this profession is also incredibly important and can be so rewarding. Try out some of these tips as the leader but also share with your teachers so they feel empowered to learn from those inevitable bad days.

Adapted from : [Lory Walker Peroff EW Blog Post](#)

--Dr. Ed U. Cation

Themes of the Month

Charter governing boards must complete at least three trainings annually. Each board chair assures trainings occurred each May. One training must cover the Open and Public Meetings Act (§52-4 – 104). The Open and Public Meetings Act training is required every year. The Utah State Auditor has provided a [training for you](#) that satisfies this requirement.

Annual training is also required for those who receive School LAND Trust funding. Information and resources about this training can be found at www.schoollandtrust.org/training. All other training can be selected by the governing board. Please consider reaching out to the [Utah Association of Public Charter Schools](#), the [Utah Charter Network](#), or other consultants for additional board training topics and presenters.

Governing boards have used three strategies for board trainings: 1) individuals take responsibility of their own training through a resource such as GBOT, 2) use a contractor to present training during the board meeting, and 3) self-directed board training as a regular agenda item.

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 <http://training.auditor.utah.gov/courses/open-and-public-meetings-act-2019>
- On October 24-26 the National Science Teachers Association is holding their Regional Conference in Salt Lake City. All science teachers, Elementary and STEM teachers would find this of great value. There is a grant available. [See link for more info](#)
- Comment on the Office of the State Auditor's draft of "[Limitations on the use of restricted funds.](#)" Submit your comments to Jeremy Walker at jeremywalker@utah.gov by August 23, 2019 PM



Outstanding in Our Field

- Beehive Science & Technology Academy student Ketura received her Congressional Award Bronze Medal from Congressman Rep. John Curtis—a great start to the new academic year.
- Navigator Pointe Academy will be spotlighted at the SCSB's September 9th meeting for their fantastic transfer rate.
- Utah Business named Beehive's Principal Oguz as a Utah Living Colors Gala Honoree!
- Niche released their "[2020 Best Schools in America](#)" rankings. For Utah high schools, charters comprise all the top five and eight of the top 10!
- Mountain Heights Academy students Rachel Amedee, Abby Atkinson, Gavin Grose, & Kate Watson earned a national award from the 17th annual eCYBERMISSION competition. Each receives \$9,000 U.S. E.E. Savings Bonds (matured value) for their winning submission to the STEM competition!!
- Mountain Heights Academy student, Emma Davis, competed in the National History Fair in Washington DC in June for her website designed to highlight the atrocities of Camp Sobibor during WWII. Awesome!

September 2019

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						1
2	3	4	<u>USBE Meeting</u> 5	<u>USBE Committees</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

October 2019

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			<u>USBE Meeting</u>	<u>USBE Committees</u>		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	<u>SCSB Meeting</u> 11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			