

**MINUTES OF THE
UTAH STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

Thursday, November 10, 2016

USB E – Board Rooms

APPROVED

Members Present:

Vice Chair DeLaina Tonks
Member Bruce Davis
Member Dean Brockbank
Member Michelle Smith
Member Greg Haws

Members Excused

Chair Kristin Elinkowski
Member Robert Enger

Staff Present:

Jennifer Lambert
Blanca Estrada
Rabecca Cisneros
Jo Schmitt

Others present:

Bryan Quesenberry, Terryl Warner, Natalie Grange, Teresa Theurer, Tina Smith, Susie Scherer, Stephanie Colson, James Montgomery, Kevin Cummings, Jeremy Brown, Craig Frank, Tiffanie Owens, Warren Shenk, Darren Hensley, Kevin Fenstermacher, Alan Shino

Call to Order

Vice Chair DeLaina Tonks called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chair DeLaina Tonks led the board and those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Chair Report

Vice Chair DeLaina Tonks informed the SCSB of the NACSA Conference that she, Board Member Michelle Smith, Chair Kristin Elinkowski, Executive Director Jennifer Lambert and staff member, Rabecca Cisneros attended in Atlanta, GA. Those that attended and present at the board meeting reported on the benefits, information and knowledge they took away with them from the conference.

Executive Director Jennifer Lambert reported to the SCSB an update on proceedings at the USB E board meeting. She informed the SCSB the budget was presented and well received, with good discussion. Also, the two amendment requests that were put forward for grade expansions were approved. However, she stated that USB E gave very clear guidance that they will not approve any more expansions from charter schools for next year. Executive Director Lambert also stated that staff meets with Charter School Directors every month, but in an effort to reach out to charter school board members, there will be a meeting Wednesday, November 16th at 5:30 to give them information and to connect with them better.

Consent Calendar-Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair DeLaina Tonks stated she has an adjustment to the October minutes. She was out of the room for the vote for American Preparatory Academy-Satellite #3 amendment request.

MOTION: Member Bruce Davis moved and Member Michelle Smith seconded to adopt the consent calendar, with the minutes amended. The motion carried unanimously. Chair Kristin Elinkowski and Member Robb Enger were not present for the vote.

School Spotlight – The Ranches Academy

Vice Chair DeLaina Tonks introduced The Ranches Academy as this month's school spotlight. The Ranches Academy was recognized for consistent high achievement on charter school performance standards. Tiffanie Owens, Ranches Academy's board chair and Susie Scherer, Director, informed the SCSB of the school's uniqueness, teaching techniques, and relationships between teachers, students and parents. Sadie Bott, MacKenzie Jones, and Tyson Valentine, students at Ranches Academy shared with the SCSB what they liked about Ranches Academy.

Director Scherer highlighted things that she feels sets The Ranches Academy apart from other schools. She feels when you enter the school, it has a "small school feel." It is like a family, where everyone knows your name. Because it is a small school, she feels there are fewer discipline issues, allows for differentiation, and a safe environment to learn. The school has very involved families, and they try to provide many ways for them to serve. The school has very high expectations; starting from the board, to the director, down to the staff and students. With those high expectations, they provide the resources, professional development and support needed to meet those standards. They do a lot of differentiation and differentiate in all academic areas, instructing students in the Utah CORE at their level. They also do the multi-tiered support system ensuring all students are being challenged and meeting their highest potential. They have a strong Special Education Department and are currently serving 60 students with one Special Ed Director and six paraprofessionals. They are a very data driven school, looking at the data both grade wise and longitudinally. They use a lot of assessments, including the benchmark assessments, classroom assessments, grade level assessments. They use the SAGE interim summative and formative assessments and teacher observation to determine the needs of their students. The teachers are asked to set goals based on the data. Ms. Scherer stated she feels another way the school is successful, is they strive to exceed the state's goals financially. She pointed out that 57% of the school's expenses go to salaries; which is a large amount, but they know instruction and lowering the teacher ratio is vital and that is what helps their students excel.

Board Strategic Plan and Structure

Committees – The State Charter School Board Committees (Executive, Governance, Finance, Authorizing and Amendment and Performance Oversight) were presented with tasks, timelines for meetings and members for each committee.

MOTION: Member Bruce Davis moved and Member Dean Brockbank seconded to approve the committee organization as outlined in the document distributed. The motion carried unanimously. Chair Kristin Elinkowski and Member Robb Enger were not present for the vote.

Timeline – A timeline document was distributed, which is a companion piece to the committees, to show what things are coming up throughout the school year. Vice Chair Tonks stated that, as a leadership team, this timeline would make it very transparent for our schools, for our board members, for everybody involved to know exactly what would be expected each month at the SCSB meetings.

MOTION: Member Dean Brockbank moved and Member Bruce Davis seconded to approve the timeline document as outlined. The motion carried unanimously. Chair Kristin Elinkowski and Member Robb Enger were not present for the vote.

Goals – The document that was distributed reflected the changes that were discussed last month during the SCSB meeting. Also, a list of charter school high school graduation dates for review, for the board’s ability to attend at their convenience.

MOTION: Member Michelle Smith moved and Member Dean Brockbank seconded to approve the SCSB Goals as outlined. The motion carried unanimously. Chair Kristin Elinkowski and Member Robb Enger were not present for the vote.

Enrollment Data Reports

Documents were distributed reflecting the October 1 counts, 2016 Transfer Rates and the 2016 to 2017 Retention Rates. Overall, charter enrollment growth slowed significantly this year. In the past few years, total enrollment in charters in our portfolio grew an average of 11.5%. Total enrollment in charters in our portfolio grew only 7% from last year to this year. The vast majority of that growth came from new schools. Further, 44 schools decreased in enrollment; some significantly so. However, the overall transfer and retention rates are similar to the prior year, though there are some interesting differences at the school level.

After discussion, Vice Chair Tonks directed staff to research and make inquiries regarding enrollment and status of those schools that are on warning, and bring that information back to the SCSB in their December meeting. The newly formed Finance Committee stated they felt it would be beneficial to meet sooner than their scheduled March meeting and filter through the most critical issues, before presenting to the full board.

Board Training – Making Motions

Bryan Quesenberry, in David Thomas’ absence, conducted training on proper procedure regarding making motions during board meetings.

Update on Current Audits from Utah State Board of Education Internal Audit Section

Debbie Davis, Internal Auditor Director at USBE, presented a high level overview of current and planned audits begin done by USBE. Some of these audits are of charter schools and are not yet complete.

Schools on Probation – Update and Possible Action

Kairos Academy was originally placed on probation in March 2015 and was again placed on probation in April 2016, with the same terms and conditions as the original probation and directed to come before the SCSB immediately following any decision on accreditation.

MOTION: Member Dean Brockbank moved and Member Bruce Davis seconded to remove Kairos Academy from probation items #1-3 where they appear to have met the terms the SCSB has set and continue probation status on items #4-7, report to the SCSB in their February 2017 meeting, and have continued staff involvement to best meet the terms of probation. The motion carried unanimously. Chair Kristin Elinkowski and Member Robb Enger were not present for the vote.

Aristotle Academy informed the SCSB of their decision to close the school at the end of the 2016-17 school year. Representatives of the school stated because of the recent withdrawal of the Renaissance Academy Voluntary School Improvement Plan Proposal, they feel they have limited options and the board felt the best course of action would be to proceed with the school’s School Closure Plan.

MOTION: Member Dean Brockbank moved and Member Michelle Smith seconded to accept Aristotle Academy's request to terminate their charter and close the school at the end of the 2016-2017 school year, consistent with Utah Code 53A-1a-510.5, have Aristotle Academy's board work with the SCSB staff to have immediate access to financial data and information to confirm the ability to continue as a going concern through the end of the school year and to provide a mentor to ensure a smooth transition through the closure process. The motion carried unanimously. Chair Kristin Elinkowski and Member Robb Enger were not present for the vote.

SCSB Procedures Discussion

A document outlining procedures the SCSB could take in adopting any policy or procedures. The intent of the document is not to take on rule-making authority, but instead to increase transparency so that any standard, policy, or procedure used by the SCSB (including the charter school performance standards or a new charter agreement template) must be subject to this process.

Member Greg Haws recommended to change the wording in 1a regarding the 30 day publish time. He suggested using a more generic term, in accordance with board rules or to expand it to read rules, goals or objectives. Mr. Haws went on to say that one of the SCSB goals is to be more outreaching to their stake holders.

Staff was given direction to make the suggested changes with language and bring back to the next board meeting.

Adjourn

Motion: Member Bruce Davis moved to adjourn at 12:20 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.