



**FEBRUARY
2023**

**CHARTER
BOARD BUZZ**

The official newsletter of the SCSB



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



The State Charter School Board “advance[s] quality choice...through rigorous authorizing and supportive oversight.” And we define what that work looks like through our value of excellence. “We do not settle for average, and we celebrate high achievements. We learn and grow from mistakes and adjust when necessary. What we do, we do well.” As an authorizer of public charter schools, there is an obligation to the citizens of Utah to be able to say that, yes, this school will appropriately and fairly use public funds to educate students. And so, by providing oversight and support, the SCSB can make sure the community, students, and taxpayers, have quality choices, and will continue to have quality choices. What an honor it is to authorize some of the absolute best schools in the state. Keep up the excellent work, because I know we will.

Charter Employee of the Month



This is Tammy Israelsen. She is the Office Manager at Freedom Prep Academy, for the Provo Elementary Campus.

Lynne Herring, the Executive Director writes, "Tammy is a very long time employee who has been instrumental in shaping our organization's systems such as lottery, policy, attendance and daily operations.

She is always a mentor, cheerleader, creative artist, advisor and all around coach in many areas of the school. She is positive, resourceful, dependable, generous and always there for any student, parent, teacher, and colleague. We call her the Jack of all trades and master of many!

The answer to almost any question is...go ask Tammy.

She is the glue that holds the ongoing and growing organization together."

Keep up the great work, Ms. Israelsen!

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

December:

The board reviewed the probation of Vanguard Academy. The board received an academic report from the School Performance Coordinator. The board also received an enrollment report from the School Performance Coordinator. The board reviewed the new school and satellite approval process, as this will take place in the coming months. The board reviewed a conference some members and staff had attended and shared key takeaways.

January:

The board heard from three applicant schools seeking to be new charter schools in the state of Utah. Applicants were: a financial literacy and CTE 6-12 school in Morgan, a classical model K-8 school in Cedar City, and a statewide online K-12 school. Board members were able to ask questions and hear from applicants.

The statewide online school, Elevated Charter School, was approved. The other two were not, and were invited to reapply in the next cycle.

Catch up anytime on our YouTube channel

www.youtube.com/UtahSCSB

NOTES FROM THE SCSB

BOARD COMMITTEES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the advantages of having a committee structure?

Committees allow boards to operate more efficiently, since detailed work can be done within committees comprised of a smaller subset of members. Also, since committees are typically staffed with members who have specific, content-rich expertise, more in depth discussions and analyses can take place, resulting in well-informed recommendations to the full board. Those recommendations are then presented to the full board for review and approval at regular board meetings.

How does a school determine which committees to create?

Although not generally required, standing committees are often explicitly defined in the school's bylaws. Boards should develop a strategic, lean committee structure, only creating and naming in its bylaws the standing committees it needs to facilitate and elevate its work.

Will the committee structure we develop always remain the same?

The committee structure will and should change over time as the board evolves. High performing boards also create fewer standing committees and use short-term, project based task forces more frequently.

Which standing committees are most frequently created?

While committee structures will differ somewhat from board to board, Charter Board Partners recommends that schools create at least four standing committees: Finance (which would be also be responsible for oversight of the audit function), Governance, Academic Excellence, and Development. If the board can only support three committees initially, it should establish a Finance, Governance, and Academic Excellence Committee.

Are there other formal structures that Boards can adopt?

If the strategic needs of the board require additional structure, boards can create task forces, and the Board's authority to do so is often referenced in the school's bylaws. Task forces operate similar to a committee, but task forces often have a shorter-term agenda and frequently include non-board members. Often task forces are created for facilities procurement or improvement, strategic planning, a school leader search, a fundraising campaign or special event, or to consider replication or expansion.

Does a committee or task force need a specifically defined purpose?

Every committee and task force needs a written charge clarifying its purpose and scope of authority, a chair to lead it, and a minimum of two additional members to add a minimal diversity of opinion and have enough people power to complete the work at

hand. Annual work plans are developed to help committees focus on their annual goals, and committees should meet as often as needed to accomplish their work.

How are the activities of committees and task forces documented?

Minutes, generally no longer than one page, are taken at each meeting detailing attendance, recommendations for the board's consideration, high-level overview of

discussions, and action steps. The written minutes should be shared with the full board in a timely fashion; verbal reports to the board are needed only for recommendations for the board's consideration or key strategic issues that require board discussion.

See more at: [Charter Board Partners](#)

Be sure to check out the 2023 Annual Report now up on the SCSB website!



LET'S NETWORK

Learning who's who in our charter world

SPOTLIGHT: SCSB MEMBER

Erik Olson, SCSB Member

How long you have been with the SCSB? Almost two years.

What is your background in? I am a practicing trial lawyer. I first became interested in charter schools when I helped create a charter school over 15 years ago. Through the course of several years as a charter school governing board member, I grew to love working with teachers, administrators, and others who are passionate about education.

What is your favorite part of your role with the SCSB? I really enjoy the interaction with my fellow board members and our staff, who each have such an incredible depth of experience, talent, and energy that they bring to their responsibilities and assignments.

What is your favorite way to relax?

I ride bikes and ski, but don't get out nearly as often as I would like. I also love traveling the world and finding new and interesting places to explore with my family.

What is one thing you hope to accomplish this year?

I'm hoping to make it all the way through the year without hitting the family out-of-pocket maximum on my health insurance coverage—a healthy and happy 2023!



SPOTLIGHT: CHARTER DIRECTOR

Emily Merchant, Wasatch Waldorf Charter School

I have been here for 10 years, including the founding, pre-operational time. My background is in education policy and teaching in various arenas. In the course of the past 10 years, I have earned my MA in Education and am half-way through a EdD, both with an emphasis on Waldorf Education and Administration.

I love working with people and seeing real community form and real, deep, transformational learning happen, for students and adults.

I relax by traveling! I relish breaks and getting away.

This year, I hope to get out of my office and move more in every possible way.



SPOTLIGHT: CHARTER BOARD MEMBER

Olivia Kirkham, Thomas Edison Charter Schools

How long have you been with your school? I have been working with Thomas Edison schools for 12 years.

What is your background in? I have a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in literacy curriculum & instruction.

What is your favorite part of your role with your school? As a board chair, I enjoy working with the principals and supporting them.

What is your favorite way to relax? I enjoy warm baths when I want to relax.

What is one thing you hope to accomplish this year? In the coming year, I hope to spend more than 500 hours outside with my daughter.



SPOTLIGHT: CHARTER BUSINESS MANAGER

Kent Brown, Utah Arts Academy

I have been with Utah Arts Academy for nine years. I earned a bachelor's degree from BYU and an MBA from Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. While in the Pacific Northwest, I was employed in the restaurant and building services industries, where my focus was in operations management, including accounting and human resources. We moved back to Southern Utah to be near family, and have lived here for 17 years. I ran my own CFO-for-hire small business and taught as an adjunct for about six years in the business school at Utah Tech University. I am now going into my tenth year in the education industry.

I enjoy collaborating with our admin team and faculty in helping to support students. I'm a hands-on, nuts-and-bolts kind of guy; I enjoy the details, and I like to make things more efficient. I also enjoy reading books on creativity, curiosity, and business, which helps me improve and "sharpen the saw."

Outside of work, I love to golf, and St. George is perfect for it year-round. I also enjoy pickleball and hiking with my family, and singing in a community choir.

I would love to give each of you a tour of our new facility. For those of you in snowy climates, St. George is a great place to visit during the winter and get away from the snow shovel. All are welcome any time.



SPOTLIGHT: SCSB STAFF

Liz Bunker, School Remediation Coordinator

I started at the SCSB in February 2021 – about to hit my two-year anniversary!

I have a BFA in Painting and a Masters in Nonprofit Management. I taught secondary art for 10 years, most of that time in charter schools. I am a practicing artist with a studio who paints and exhibits regularly around SLC. You can see some of my public murals and artwork in South Salt Lake, Sugarhouse, along the Jordan River and on Main Street in downtown. I am an artist at heart who fell into teaching and loved every moment of my time with students creating art. I jumped at the opportunity to join the SCSB, I saw the possibility to make a meaningful impact for Utah students, improve systems, bring creativity, and foster educational innovation on a larger scale.

I absolutely love the team here at the SCSB. I am inspired by the amazing knowledge and leadership of Jennifer Lambert, our Executive Director. I love seeing what socks Dr. Evans has on for board meetings, getting my own special emotional support from the kind Marie Steffensen, being a foodie with Joanne Castillo, and meeting with my amazing remediation team. I love chatting with Vice Chair Phillips about literally anything, she's so fun and interesting. I love member Spicher's passion and fearlessness, Chair Bowles' empathy and kind touch, Member Basset's thoughtfulness and wisdom, Member Olsen's insight and fairness, and Member Smith's boldness, both in her comments and her fashion. I love the challenge of remediation and the finesse and balance it takes.

Living downtown, I love to try new restaurants and going out on the town to find some trouble. I enjoy riding my bike around the city, creating artwork, gardening, true crime, and nurturing my houseplants (I have over 100, and collect rare plants!)

In 2023, in my professional life, I would like to accomplish a better understanding of the legalities surrounding our work, continue to improve our processes in remediation, and strengthen the relationships with the schools we authorize. In my personal life, I really want to sell a lot of artwork, plant a huge vegetable garden, and adopt a really old and mean chihuahua – the dream is to have a pack of small attack dogs at my side, at all times.



SPOTLIGHT: CHARTER TEACHER

Katie Stoker, Bear River Charter School

I am in my 5th year of teaching at Bear River Charter School. My background is in plant science with an emphasis in weed science.

I think that my favorite part of the job is getting to know the students and the challenge of trying to differentiate teaching so that all of them can succeed.

My favorite way to relax is to sit on a beach and watch the sunset. Since beaches are in short supply in Logan, Utah, I usually read, ski, or hike to relax my mind.

One thing I hope to accomplish this coming year is to tier my math program and implement more scaffolding so that more of my students will feel successful in math and not hate it so much.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

You can nominate an employee of the month by going to <https://www.utahscsb.org/team-3>

Please email and pictures you'd like to see featured by the SCSB to helloscsb@schools.utah.gov

The training calendar can be found here:

<https://ucap.schools.utah.gov/TrainingAndSupport/Trainings#trainingMenu>

The reporting calendar can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1vvYxS9lb4Mxcb43a97q-kh4wHIVkbb7/edit#gid=38538872>

The Utah Association of Public Charter Schools has trainings coming up. If you would like more information, please email Shannon Greer at shannon@utahcharters.org

The ACES program will provide training targeted to individuals interested in becoming charter school administrators. All classes will be offered over Zoom, with the option to join an in person session 3 times throughout the course. Classes will be taught by educational leaders throughout the state and there is no cost to participate.