

Utah State Charter School Board Meeting
Minutes
February 16, 2006
North & South Board Rooms
Utah State Office of Education

APPROVED

Members present: Julie Adamic, Brian Allen, Barbara Killpack, Eric Smith, and Scott Smith

Members excused: David Moss and Sonia Zisumbo

Staff present: John Broberg, Gary Belliston, Jo Schmitt

Others present: Janene Bowen, Darren Beck, Stephanie Colson, Representatives from Academy of the Americas Charter School, Representatives from C.S. Lewis Academy Charter School, Patty Murphy, and Richard Tolley

Media present: Celia Baker

Call to Order

Vice Chair Scott Smith called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Member Julie Adamic and seconded by Vice Chair Scott Smith to approve the minutes from the January 19, 2006 State Charter School Board Meeting. The motion was carried unanimously.

Legislative Update

Member Julie Adamic gave a brief summary of the five initiatives the Utah Charter School Association is supporting during the present legislative session. Those initiatives are: local levy replacement increase and formula change; administrative cost formula change; providing grant training and additional FTEs for the Charter School Section at USOE; one-time startup funds for new charter schools; and facility lease aid. The local levy replacement increase initiative was #2 on the priority list established by the appropriations committee; administrative cost formula change was placed #5 and, training costs was #6. The training costs and additional FTEs were separated on the priority list, therefore training costs remained #6 and the additional staff was moved to #22. One-time startup funds for new schools came in as #7 on the priority list. Ms. Adamic stated lease aid most likely will not progress this legislative session.

Timeline for Facility with New Charter Schools

Vice Chair Scott Smith requested Director John Broberg and Gary Belliston to generate a report concerning the status of new charter school facilities. With that report the Charter School Board would determine a date or timeline for new charter schools to have facilities in place in order to start operation. Vice Chair Scott Smith requested this concern to be placed on the agenda for March 16, 2006 Charter School Board Meeting.

Education Specialist Position

Director John Broberg informed the State Charter School Board the State Office of Education hired Marlies Burns to be the Federal Program Director for Utah's Charter Schools. Ms. Burns has been the principal at Uintah River High School in Ft. Duchesne, Utah. She would begin her position at USOE on February 21, 2006.

Federal Start-up and Implementation Grant Awards

Gary Belliston informed the State Charter School Board of the \$12 million Federal Grant that is divided over 3 years, making the grant \$4 million per year. He distributed a spreadsheet reflecting the award amounts for the 37 schools that were eligible for the award. Mr. Belliston stated the requests for funding from the schools totaled \$8.2 million and the grant award amount is \$4,000,000; with \$200,000 used for administrative costs and \$400,000 for dissemination grants; making \$3,400,000 available to the charter schools. The average award was \$92, 567. Director John Broberg informed the State Charter School Board there was criteria the grant applications would be scored on. The readers of the applications were charter school directors that no longer qualified for Federal Start-up Grant funds. Those readers scored the applications, and the State Office took those scores and divided the available funds according to the scores the schools received. Member Barbara Killpack inquired if the awards were based on enrollment. She was informed that it was not, and that this particular grant is different from previous grants and it is very competitive. Mr. Belliston informed the State Charter School Board that 21 states applied for this grant money and only seven states received awards; with Utah being one of those seven states.

State Board Rules

Director John Broberg updated the State Charter School Board of the status of State Board Rule R277-470-3 Charter School Orientation and Training and R277-470-8 Charter School Parental Involvement. Mr. Broberg stated the Utah State Board of Education, in their February 3rd meeting had made slight wording changes in the rules that had been presented. Changing R277-470-3 (A) to read...shall attend...from...be invited to attend...and changing R277-470-8 (B) to have at least one elected parent representative and (D)to have a majority of parents elected from parents of students currently attending the charter school on the committee designated to make School LAND Trust decisions.

Director John Broberg informed the State Charter School Board that Summit Academy has been preparing to make changes to their governing board and would make their final changes concerning parental involvement when the Utah State Board of Education has finalized the State Rule R277-470-8.

School Finance

Patty Murphy, Education Specialist from School Finance and Statistics at USOE, distributed to the State Charter School Board a handout for the Minimum School Program: All or Partial Block Formulas. In the body of that handout the FY06 Administrative Cost, Local Discretionary Block Grant and Interventions for Student Success Block Grant Formulas were detailed. Ms. Murphy informed the State Charter School Board that the School Finance and Statistic Section at USOE, collects enrollment projections in the fall that are used for legislative purposes. She stated brand new schools are not completely sure of what their enrollment will be so the section requests the information again in May. With those May numbers, they revise the budget.

Ms. Murphy made the suggestion that because of the additional administrative cost money that those funds be tied to someone who has accounting or financial experience. To get those funds, the school needs to hire someone with accounting skills.

Ms. Murphy stated that as new charter schools are added, and/or additional students are added to existing schools, the formulas are affected. As the numbers of enrollment increases, the number of WPU's decline.

Ms. Murphy also distributed a spreadsheet to the State Charter School Board reflecting the various charter schools that have not submitted their Reading Achievement Funds plan. She pointed out the amount of funds that is not being utilized and expressed her concern.

The Ranches Academy – Amendment

Daren Beck, Director of The Ranches Academy presented The Ranches Academy amendment to their charter to add 7th and 8th grades and governing board rule changes. Their original charter was approved for those grades

in subsequent years, but the governing board is asking to add those grades now, and not wait for the following years. Vice Chair Scott Smith inquired to the school's enrollment with Mr. Beck informing him the enrollment number is 360. The charter was approved for full capacity of 450 which would not be exceeded by adding the 7th and 8th grades. Member Julie Adamic inquired if they would be using a self-contained model, Mr. Beck's answer was in the affirmative.

Motion was made by Member Eric Smith and seconded by Member Barbara Killpack to approve The Ranches Academy amendment to their charter to add 7th and 8th grades beginning in September 2006. The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. Beck questioned the State Charter School Board concerning the acceptance of the governance issues in their amendment. Mr. Beck informed the State Charter School Board that the amendment attempts to put The Ranches Academy governance more in line with the Board Rule R277-470-8. Vice Chair Scott Smith questioned how this amendment would change the charter as it is now. Mr. Beck informed him that with the exception of one elected parent, they have appointed members of the board from their list of founders. He feels within the next four years, they will have a 100% elected governing board for the school. Member Julie Adamic inquired how many governing board members have been elected by the parents. Mr. Beck informed her, at this time there is one; he also stated that amount will change in May, and all members will be elected and not appointed.

Stephanie Colson, The Ranches Academy Board President, addressed the concerns the State Charter School Board had regarding the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees and Governing Council. Ms. Colson informed the State Charter School Board that the Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the Governing Council, hire and dismiss the school's administrator, and appoint four of the Governing Council members. Ms. Colson informed the State Charter School Board that the Board of Trustees responsibility is to oversee the Governing Council. Member Eric Smith stated he felt there is not a clear authority line between the Board of Trustees and the Governing Council of the school. Member Brian Allen suggested the Board of Trustees needs to clearly outline the responsibility and power of the Board of Trustees; so if the Governing Council makes a decision that the Board of Trustees feels goes outside the vision or mission of the school, everyone needs to clearly understand the Board of Trustees has veto power. Member Eric Smith stressed that the Board of Trustees is the governing board of the school and that the Board of Trustees needs to have one person nominated to that board. If the Board of Trustees has ultimate authority, and can make judgments of the school, that is the real governing board and needs to have at least one person nominated to that board and abide by rule R277-470-8. Ms. Colson questioned if they should prepare a flow chart reflecting the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees and Governing Council. Member Eric Smith suggested waiting until legislation makes the final passing of rule R277-470, then all schools will have to submit to USOE new governance clarification documentation.

Academy of the Americas Charter Application

Representatives for Academy of the Americas presented to the State Charter School Board the school's vision and mission to provide a dual language immersion curriculum in Spanish and English.

Member Barbara Killpack questioned with the school using a lottery, how can they ensure to have equal numbers of English speaking and English learning students? Barbara Fink, Chief Administrative Officer for the school, responded by informing the State Charter School Board the school plans to use targeted street-level outreach, home meetings, community meetings, and will have booths at appropriate community events. Also, they plan to partner with community agencies, seek referrals, and implement a media campaign through print, radio and television media in Spanish and English. Vice Chair Scott Smith inquired what would be the school's response if there were 350 Latinos that applied for enrollment. Ms. Fink responded that the school's goal is to have a fifty-fifty mix of English speaking and ELL students, but will start with the enrollment that is obtained, but continue to strive toward their goal, but would adapt the instructional methods as necessary.

Question was raised concerning a non-Spanish speaking student enrolling in the school that had no previous Spanish emphasis instruction; how would the school adapt their teaching methods to accommodate that student? Ms. Fink responded they would tailor their curriculum for a student that would not be capable for a fifty-fifty mix model. The school would follow a supplemental Spanish model and tailor the teaching methods individually.

Member Brian Allen inquired of the area they intend the school to be located. Ms. Fink informed the State Charter School Board they have a geographical analysis showing where the families that have shown interest in a dual immersion school are located, as well as income levels. Also, they are looking into transportation availability, so the school can be located in an area to make it best for the families to get their children to the school.

Motion was made by Member Eric Smith and seconded by Member Julie Adamic to recommend Academy of the Americas for full charter to the Utah State Board of Education, to begin operation in September 2007. The motion was carried unanimously.

C.S. Lewis Academy Charter Application

Representatives from C.S. Lewis presented to the State Charter School Board the school's vision and mission of creating a dynamic learning environment where students can develop a love of learning through self-critique and self-motivation.

Member Barbara Killpack, because of the stringent curriculum program in the school, inquired how would the school handle remediation with those students that may not have the firm parental support they are hoping for in the home. The State Charter School Board was informed the school will be using Mastery Learning and plans implementing additional help with before and after school programs. Also re-teaching the concept in different ways, so they can ensure all students grasp the concepts that are being taught, whether or not they are receiving the help at home.

Member Barbara Killpack asked for clarification on student placement. The State Charter School Board was informed C.S. Lewis Academy would be using an assessment inventory to decide how each student learns. Through that assessment, the students will be placed in classrooms that will allow teachers to know how each student learns and have a better understanding how to approach that student.

Member Julie Adamic pointed out that in their goal section of their application; they are lacking science and math goals. C.S. Lewis was asked to revise that part of their application to include science and math goals that would reflect Utah's requirements.

Member Julie Adamic expressed her concern of their special education teacher being their LEA, and making their financial decisions for the school. The State Charter School Board requested C.S. Lewis Academy to make a change in their application to reflect their administration will serve as LEA.

Motion was made by Member Barbara Killpack and seconded by Member Eric Smith to recommend C.S. Lewis Academy for full charter to the Utah State Board of Education, to begin operation in August 2007; with the requested changes concerning science and math goals and clarification of LEA. The motion was carried unanimously.

Adjourn

Motion was made to adjourn at 1:10 p.m. The motion was carried unanimously.