

**MINUTES OF THE
UTAH STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**
Thursday, March 13, 2014 – Board Rooms
USOE

APPROVED

Members Present:

Chair Tim Beagley
Vice Chair Dean Brockbank
Member Laura Belnap
Member Bruce Davis
Member Kristin Elinkowski
Member Howard Headlee

Members Absent:

Member Robert Enger

Staff present:

Marlies Burns
Jennifer Lambert
Janene Bowen
Jo Schmitt

Others present:

Kim Burningham, Roderic Land, Brian Myrup, Jason Douglas, Lorie Wilkins, Tina Smith, Tonya Fischio, Erin Taylor, Kenna Vallejos, Jan Searle, Courtnie Moore, Steve Finley, David Lindmeir, Joylin Lincoln, Elizabeth Hatch, Anne Desjardins, Tim Slocum, Steve Crandall, Holly Sonntag, Lisa Cutler, Sandy Shepard, David Moss, Leif Nelson, Wade Watts

Call to Order

Chair Tim Beagley called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Tim Beagley led the board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Chair Report

Chair Beagley introduced Roderic Land to the SCSB. He replaced Freddie Cooper as the representative from CMAC on the SCSB. Mr. Land stated he has been in Utah for that last ten years, coming out of Chicago. Mr. Land stated he have previously been a professor at the University of Utah in the College of Education, and left that position to work for the County Mayor, Ben McAdams serving as his education liaison and management coordinator for the county.

Consent Calendar

MOTION: Member Bruce Davis moved and Member Laura Belnap seconded to approve the consent calendar (minutes of the SCSB meetings held February 12 and 13, 2014). The motion was carried unanimously.

State Board of Education meeting update

Member Kristin Elinkowski informed the SCSB that Utah Military Academy's charter was authorized by the USBE to open in fall 2014.

Online and Distant Learning audit was discussed but no action was taken. Ms. Elinkowski stated the USBE will be forming a task force to look at the full report and any necessary changes.

Minor rule changes that would affect charter school accreditation and licensing routes were also discussed.

Legislation appropriated \$354,000 to charter schools for new staff, which still needs to be signed by the Governor.

Legislative update

Chair Tim Beagley stated there were little updates to legislation issues because of them still being in session. Mr. Beagley stated that the budget bills have been approved; the student enrollment preferences bill has passed as well. Director Marlies Burns informed the SCSB that the amendments to the budget also included enough students to cover the discrepancy between what has been approved by the charter board and what was approved in intent language last year. As well as providing very specific language on providing appropriations of local replacement and student numbers to the schools approved under the new and creative law.

Amendment request – Legacy Preparatory Academy

Representatives from Legacy Preparatory Academy informed the SCSB of their request to add 70 students; 30 students in grades 7-8 in FY16 and 40 students in grade 9 in FY17.

MOTION: Member Howard Headlee moved and Member Kristin Elinkowski seconded to recommend for approval to the USBE the amendment request. The motion carried unanimously.

Amendment request – Ronald Reagan Academy

Representatives from Ronald Reagan Academy informed the SCSB of their request to revise the purposes of the school, revise performance measures, remove monitoring of the program of instruction, change governing board composition.

MOTION: Member Bruce Davis moved and Vice Chair Dean Brockbank seconded to approve the amendment request. The motion carried unanimously.

Amendment request – American Leadership Academy

Representatives from American Leadership Academy informed the SCSB of their request to add a satellite school in Nebo School District serving grades K-8 and 450 students beginning in SY2015.

Chair Tim Beagley expressed his disappointment of no American Leadership Academy board members in attendance at the SCSB meeting. Mr. Beagley stated that when the SCSB entertains an amendment request, a school is asking to change the contract the school board members has with the SCSB members, and with none of them attending the meeting is disappointing. Member Howard Headlee, as well as Vice Chair Dean Brockbank also expressed their disappointment with none of American Leaderships Academy's board members in attendance.

MOTION: After much discussion Member Howard Headlee made motion to move to the next item on the agenda; therefore, no action was taken by the SCSB regarding the amendment request.

School reports

High performing charter schools were invited to attend the SCSB meeting and share their methods, procedures and best practices for success.

Bear River Charter School – Bear River Charter School presented a PowerPoint presentation. Because Bear River Charter School is a small school with small class sizes, the multiple instructional groups in the basic skills areas considerably smaller than a typically school with a 20/1 ratio; Bear River Charter School is closer

with a to 10/1 ratio. Because of the smaller classrooms it allows interaction with student and administration to know each individual student, to know where they are academically and socially. The students are grouped in ability or skill level grouping in reading and math, instead of grouping students by age or grade, which keeps the students at their instructional level.

Direct instruction is main foundation of the school's curriculum and instruction, with the focus on systematic and explicit instruction trying to communicate as clearly as possible by teaching with generalization. High rate of active student responding and interaction, with the student actively engaged in the subject matter. The school focuses on how students are learning the curriculum, not just the process. In addition to the very intense focus on math, reading, language arts, the school also has a school wide Spanish program; art taught by specialists in grades K-8; music integrated in the core curriculum; middle school science program that integrates field experience with ongoing contact with the local nature center. Also, the school uses a school wide positive behavioral support concept using a systematic way of recognizing good, appropriate behavior that is consistent across all classrooms and coordinated school wide.

A big priority of Bear River Charter School is to have the students be happy, and they put a lot of attention into that effort.

Excelsior Academy – Excelsior Academy acknowledges the mentoring and help they received from American Preparatory Academy. The school focuses on academic rigor as well as virtuous character development. They use leveled learning at the students' challenged level. The school has a paraprofessional in every elementary classroom, which is a great support to the teacher as well as the students. Leveled learning is assessed and students are put into groups not just on an annual basis, but on an ongoing process throughout the year; as students master a level, they may be moved to another level. If they are found to have plateaued, the student is moved to a different group to be at their challenged level to find the most success.

The school has a high belief in "trivium"; the educational thought that you need to learn basic facts in a grammar stage, before you can progress into a logic stage, and then into the rhetoric stage, which are key to growth and proficiency. Excelsior Academy believes that every person has a three-leveled learning curve. Teachers understand that before logic and rhetoric can take place, students must have a strong foundation of set facts. This grammar stage brings success as students gain the ability to think in an "if/then" format. This ability, in turn, gives students desire to participate in defending knowledge and opinion, in the rhetoric phase. Even within the grammar and logic phases, students practice rhetoric as facts are mastered.

Once the students have mastered a skill, the school has culminating events; heart, lung and eye dissections; fiestas after learning about Mexico; creating electro magnets.

The school promotes positive attributes of their students to help them understand they are leaders and they can help each other become better, as they learn and as they express themselves. They use character development throughout the school and use the 'Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens' in their Jr. High classes. The school has a behavior management approach school wide, so their scholars know what is expected of them from the time they enter their educational experience at Excelsior Academy, until they leave. The exceptions are the same with every group and in every classroom.

George Washington Academy – George Washington Academy has very high expectations. The parents expect their students to come home with homework and predominately come back to school with it completed. The school has good parental support and many volunteer in the classrooms.

The school uses the Core Knowledge Sequence, and they have meetings once a week where curriculum is discussed amongst the teachers. The teachers are required to complete a 180-day plan to be turned into administration the last day of school before leaving for their summer break. In those weekly meetings the teachers also discuss student's high points and low points, things that need to do to address needs and successes

that are being found. The school tests at least four times a year using the SRI for reading comprehension, Spalding for spelling tests and Six Minute Solutions for their reading fluency. Math scores are also kept and put into the same document in Google Docs so a teacher can compare scores at each trimester level and determine if there is progress or movement backwards. If the teacher feels a student is struggling, the school has two different SST teams at the school that meet on Friday, so the teacher can refer students to that team meeting, along with the parents. A team of teachers collaborate and come up with various ideas to watch and monitor to help the student succeed. At the end of six weeks, if things have improved they continue on, if not they will look at the need for further testing and placement. This process has been incredibly helpful, rather than sending a struggling student to be test for special education services. Besides having meetings with teachers at the same grade level, they do vertical meetings; meeting with teachers of the grade above and the grade below which allows them to inform the teachers what to be prepared for or suggestions of things that should be done differently.

Monthly there is an assembly for “Character Ed” that focuses on a different character trait where teachers perform and students that best represent that trait are acknowledged.

North Star Academy – A Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM), which was originally a gifted and talented model but was expanded to become schoolwide is used at North Star Academy. The school uses curriculum modification techniques as part of their School Enrichment Model. SEM includes Total Talent Portfolios where students store and reflect upon what they consider to be their best work. Teachers and students utilize the Total Talent Portfolios to identify areas of interest, preferred learning and expression styles. Clusters are the second component of SEM. During clusters, students are grouped with other students and a facilitator who share a common interest. The students explore careers related to the topic, skills needed and ultimately identify a real world problem and solution related to the topic. The final component of SEM is Curriculum Modification. Differentiation plays a large part in curriculum modification. Students are evaluated for mastery of objects or the potential to learn the material at an accelerated pace. Identified students are compacted out of the curriculum and given the opportunity to explore the subject through a project or other in depth learning activity. Honor Students are given the opportunity to review the state core standards and for an honors project they review those standards and identify an area where they would like to expand their learning, and then write a proposal, review the proposal with their teacher, then move forward with the project to expand their learning in one of the state core standards.

Professional development of teachers is constantly reviewed and discussed. Teachers participate in professional development opportunities to learn best practices and develop their skills as professionals. Professional development needs are assessed at the end of each school year by the administration through assessments and teacher surveys. The administration then evaluates this information as they plan the professional development for the following year. Many of the professional development needs differ in relation to the level of experience each teacher has. Likewise, the professional development offered to the teachers is differentiated based on their needs.

In addition to certified teachers, each elementary class is provided with a teacher’s assistant for the core subjects. Parent volunteers are also regularly found in each classroom. This additional support to the teacher allows students to be re-taught concepts frequently as they are provided with many opportunities to work with adults individually or in small groups. North Star has a strong intervention program. Teachers systematically review data to identify students who need additional assistance. Students are referred to one of the school’s intervention specialists to gain study skills, review specific concepts, or for long term support.

North Star Academy believes in constant evaluation and growth. The school has a yearly planning meeting. In this meeting, stakeholders including the board of trustees, administration and the parent organization are brought together to evaluate and identify the successes and needs of the school. The stakeholders then select one area of growth to focus on for the upcoming school year. A goal is set and all three groups set specific action items to help in achieving the goal.

NUAMES – Partnered with Weber State University and receives great support. The small class sizes of the school gives additional advantages including an intimate relationship with all students. Because of the relationship with Weber State University, NUAMES feels they have an advantage in helping their students earn Associates Degrees. NUAMES also has cordial and well-functioning relationships with other universities.

Teachers are given competitive salaries and benefit packages with performance bonuses. Teachers are given monthly collaborative and professional development opportunities. They are observed and evaluated on a quarterly basis for performance. A portfolio is required of all faculty and staff, including administration to show evidence of instructional efficiency. The school communicates with parents on a regular basis. The students, parents, administration and board are all working towards the same goals. Everyone is treated as members of a family.

NUAMES puts a high priority on academic performance and opportunity. The students' performances increase their opportunities, and as the students' opportunities increase, so does their performance.

Superintendent Bowles of Davis School District holds a quarterly meeting, titled "Davis Education Network" with the charter schools that are located within the geographic boundaries of Davis School District. In those meetings different items are discussed: how to make transitions easier, what trainings the district is conducting that charter schools are welcome to attend, specialists from the district are also in attendance.

Summit Academy – Summit Academy focuses on the individual student and helping those individual students progress the best they can. A computer adaptive test has been administered three times a year to identify the individual students' learning level so there is awareness in their instructional grouping and how they differentiate instruction for the student.

Summit Academy provides continuing professional development to assist their teachers and paraprofessional to be more effective in small group instruction. They have implemented a teacher training program for all new teachers and are making a conscious effort to improve professional practices and student engagement. All new elementary teachers are enrolled in reading endorsement courses.

Instructional groups are leveled according to student ability and the focus is on individual achievement and academic progression. The school focuses on being proficient but is aiming past the minimum.

Also, support and involvement from the governing board being aware of and involved with education issues of the school has contributed to the school's success. Collaboration with other schools and districts to know of their expertise is beneficial as well.

Wasatch Peak Academy – Professional development is important to the success of Wasatch Peak Academy's teachers. The principal establishes school professional development opportunities for staff while allowing teachers to choose professional development opportunities outside of the school that meet their individual goals and needs. The school supports individual teacher development by paying for registration, etc. Extra time has been provided for teaching assistant's professional development as well. Also, administration worked early with teachers on the implementation of the common core; teachers were working with students a year in advance of the required implementation.

Wasatch Peak Academy has a great administration that hires well and strives to have all teachers and aids highly qualified. Mentor teachers serve as support for new teachers and the school is committed to having all teachers meet state and national standards of excellence.

Wasatch Peak Academy has a case management team that looks at individual student progress. The team meetings help to generate intervention ideas for individual students as well as giving teachers a chance to share best practices.

Wasatch Peak Academy uses an effective teacher evaluation system that looks at specific content areas for elementary teachers. The evaluation process has allowed administration and teachers to have crucial conversations about student performance and how to improve student outcomes. Data-driven decisions are made to provide the best instruction for students' needs.

Fiscal Year 15 budget

Director Marlies Burns stated because of SB2 passing with the specific language there are revisions to the proposed budget the SCSB needs to be aware. In FY15, Director Burns proposed state and federal revenue included \$1.5 million in start-up grants; however, that amount did not get passed in SB2 so the state and federal revenue would be reduced by \$1.5 million as well as the start-up and implementation grant amount.

Director Burns requested input as to ideas and suggestions the SCSB would like to incorporate in the budget. Ms. Burns recommended three full-time staff members be hired: a financial manager to oversee the revolving loan funds, the charter finance authority and the start-up and implementation grant; a staff member to be responsible for charter fidelity and monitoring; and an individual to provide and oversee charter specific training.

Revise Charter School Performance Standards *Financial Performance & Sustainability measures and metrics*

Director Marlies Burns led the discussion regarding Financial Performance and Sustainability of charter schools. The Measures, Metrics and Minimum Standards document was discussed with specific discussion to the unrestricted days cash on hand, enrollment variance, debt service coverage ratio, multi-year cash flow, sections of the document.

Direction was given to Ms. Burns to send the document to charter school directors, business managers, and other interested parties for further comment, feedback and input; with final adoption April 10, at the next SCSB meeting.

Report – Charter School Proposal and Application process

Director Marlies Burns presented a new Charter School Proposal & Application Calendar for discussion and approval.

MOTION: Member Laura Belnap moved and Member Kristin Elinkowski seconded to approve the New Charter School Proposal & Application Calendar document for the next round of charter school applications. The motion carried unanimously.

School report – Wasatch Institute of Technology

Representatives of Wasatch Institute of Technology updated the SCSB the status of acquiring a facility for the school. Wasatch Institute of Technology initially considered building and/or purchasing a building but is now considering leasing a building located in Riverton, Jordan School District. Wasatch Institute of Technology is waiting for the lease review from USOE before signing the lease agreement.

Adjourn: Motion was made to adjourn at 1:00 p.m.