

**UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MEETING MINUTES**

August 21, 2014

A special meeting of the Utah State Board of Education was held August 21, 2014 at the Utah State Office of Education, 250 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, Utah. The meeting was conducted by Chair David Crandall.

**Board Members present:**

Chair David L. Crandall  
Vice Chair David L. Thomas  
Member Kim R. Burningham  
Member Keith M. Buswell  
Member Leslie B. Castle  
Member Barbara W. Corry  
Member Dan Griffiths  
Member Heather Groom

Member Michael Jensen  
Member Jennifer A. Johnson  
Member Steven R. Moore (non-voting)  
Member Jefferson Moss  
Member C. Mark Openshaw  
Member Debra G. Roberts  
Member Terryl Warner

**Board Members participating electronically:**

Member Dixie L. Allen  
Member Marlin Jensen (non-voting)  
Member Teresa L. Theurer (non-voting)

**Board Members excused:**

Member Freddie Cooper (non-voting)  
Member Kristin Elinkowski (non-voting)  
Member R. Dean Rowley (non-voting)

**Executive and Board staff present:**

Martell Menlove, State Supt.  
Judy Park, Associate Supt.  
Bruce Williams, Associate Supt.  
Lorraine Austin, Board Secretary  
Natalie Grange, Board Internal Auditor

Emilie Wheeler, Board Communications  
Specialist  
Sydnee Dickson, USOE Director of Teaching  
and Learning

**Others present:**

Dawn Davies, Utah PTA; Cheryl Phipps, Utah PTA; Laney Benedict, Utah PTA; Steve Carlsen, Utah School Superintendents Association; Sharon Zenger, USDBEA; Bonilynn Henrie, USDBEA; Bradley Henrie; Megan Hutchins; Jay Blain, UEA; Mike Hamm, UEA; Curtis Benjamin, UEA; Ron Firmage, Woodland Peaks UniServ; Joylin Lincoln, parent; Vik Arnold, UEA; Joel Briscoe, Utah House of Representatives; Laura Black, Jordan UniServ.

**Call to Order**

Chair David Crandall called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m. Assistant Attorney General David Jones was welcomed to the meeting.

**Appointment of Interim State Superintendent and Interim Deputy Superintendent**

Chair Crandall asked for a motion to move into Executive Session. No motion was made and the meeting was conducted in open session.

Vice Chair Thomas explained that since the last Board meeting he and Chair Crandall met with Superintendent Menlove to discuss the appointment of an Interim Superintendent. Chair Crandall and Vice Chair Thomas determined that appointment of an Interim Superintendent was necessary prior to the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting. Therefore, they appointed Joel Coleman, current Superintendent of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, as the Interim Superintendent on Friday, August 18. In addition, in consultation with Superintendent Menlove, Dr. Sydnee Dickson, current USOE Director of Teaching and Learning, was appointed as the Interim Deputy Superintendent.

As a result of concerns from Board members and after consultation with Assistant A.G. David Jones, this special meeting was called for the Board to vote on the appointment of the Interim State Superintendent.

**MOTION** was made by Member Thomas and seconded by Member Openshaw that the Board appoint Joel Coleman as Interim State Superintendent of Public Instruction and Sydnee Dickson as Interim Deputy Superintendent.

Vice Chair Thomas reported that since Superintendent Menlove had expressed a desire to move up his retirement from October 1, and the appointment of a new superintendent is not scheduled until October 3, it became apparent that there could be some time without a superintendent or deputy superintendent in the office. In its August 8 meeting, the Board had discussed the situation and several individuals were suggested that might fill the role of Interim Superintendent. It was the impression of Board leadership that they were authorized, if the need arose, to move forward with an appointment, subject to ratification of the Board. The Board Chair and Vice Chair attempted to call each elected member of the Board to receive input prior to making the appointment.

Vice Chair Thomas listed the following reasons why Superintendent Coleman is a good fit for the Interim Superintendent position: He is a career professional educator; a former member of the Board who knows and understands the relationship with staff; an existing employee; he is more familiar to the Board than other superintendents; he has done an outstanding job as USDB Superintendent; he has unique experience to assist with the confidential USOE risk assessment; he has the people skills necessary to assist in the transition; he will step away when the new superintendent is hired.

Vice Chair Thomas acknowledged that there is a pending lawsuit between Joel's wife and the State Charter School Board and the Charter Schools Director. To deal with the potential conflict of interest, the Interim Deputy Superintendent would have direct supervision over the Charter Schools Director.

Vice Chair Thomas listed the following reasons why Dr. Sydnee Dickson is a good fit for the Interim Deputy Superintendent: She has the experience and expertise at the USOE to assist the Board and Superintendent; she could stay on in the role of Interim Deputy once the new superintendent is appointed and until the new Superintendent makes a decision on the superintendency; she has the respect of staff; she has a working relationship with the legislature; she has the people skills needed in this transition.

It was noted that neither Superintendent Coleman or Dr. Dickson have applied for or will apply for the State Superintendent position. Chair Crandall also assured that no substantial changes will be made to any senior staff position during this transition.

Members Burningham, Warner, Buswell, Allen, Corry and Roberts discussed their main objection to Mr. Coleman's appointment as his conflict of interest due to the lawsuit. Other concerns expressed were that others weren't considered, that Superintendent Coleman doesn't have public education background and may not understand the needs of school districts, and that he will have to step away from his job at USDB.

Chair Crandall clarified that the USDB would still be overseen by Superintendent Coleman in the interim, with his two associate superintendents taking on extra responsibilities as needed.

**MOTION** to call the question was made by Member Castle and seconded by Member Openshaw.

Motion failed for lack of 2/3 vote, with Members Castle, Crandall, Griffiths, Groom, Jensen, Johnson, Moss, Openshaw and Thomas in favor, and Members Allen, Burningham, Buswell, Corry, Roberts and Warner opposed.

Chair Crandall and Vice Chair Thomas again acknowledged that there is a conflict with the lawsuit, but assured that everything possible will be done to safeguard the Board and its employees from the conflict.

Motion to appoint Joel Coleman as Interim State Superintendent and Sydnee Dickson as Interim Deputy Superintendent carried, with Members Castle, Crandall, Griffiths, Groom, Jensen, Johnson, Moss, Openshaw and Thomas in favor, and Members Allen, Burningham, Buswell, Corry, Roberts and Warner opposed.

**MOTION** was made by Member Johnson and seconded by Member Openshaw that the meeting adjourn.

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Lorraine Austin, Board Secretary  
Minutes approved September 5, 2014