

## UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

**August 18, 2020**

A special meeting of the Utah State Board of Education was held August 18, 2020. The meeting was held electronically via videoconference due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was streamed live to the public. Chair Mark Huntsman presided.

### **Members Present:**

Chair Mark Huntsman  
Vice Chair Brittney Cummins  
Member Laura Belnap  
Member Michelle Boulter  
Member Janet A. Cannon  
Member Cindy Davis  
Member Jennie Earl

Member Jennifer Graviet  
Member Scott L. Hansen  
Member Mike Haynes  
Member Carol Barlow Lear  
Member Mark R. Marsh  
Member Shawn E. Newell  
Member Laurieann Thorpe

### **Members Absent:**

Member Scott B. Neilson

### **Executive Staff Present:**

Sydnee Dickson, State Superintendent  
Scott Jones, Deputy Superintendent  
Patty Norman, Deputy Superintendent  
Angie Stallings, Deputy Superintendent

### **Minutes take by:**

Lorraine Austin, Board Secretary

### **Others Present:**

Cindy Phillips, Jennifer Lambert—State Charter School Board; Erin Taylor—Connections Academy; Meghan Meredith, Brian Maxwell —Utah Virtual Academy; Michelle Beus, Bryan Quesenberry—Assistant Attorneys General; Joel Coleman—Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind; Jerry Record, Alex Farah, Ben Rasmussen, Jeff Van Hulsten, Zac Christensen, Patrick Lee, Debbie Davis, Leah Voorhies, Jennifer Throndsen, Deborah Jacobson, Sarah Young, Darin Nielsen—USB E staff

### **Opening Business**

Chair Mark Huntsman called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

### **Special Session Legislation Recommendations and Requests for Statutory Changes**

Deputy Superintendent Angie Stallings reviewed two bills that will be discussed in the August 19 Education Interim Committee meeting—H.B. 6004 School Emergency Drill Amendments and draft bill Public Education Funding and Enrollment Amendments.

**MOTION** was made by Member Cummins and seconded that the Board support H.B. 6004 School Emergency Drill Amendments and the draft bill Public Education Funding and Enrollment Amendments.

**MOTION** to amend was made by Member Davis to add that the Board direct staff to work with the Legislature to reinstate the following programs in the Public Education Funding and Enrollment Amendments draft bill: Small School District Administrative Costs (former Section 53F-2-306); Appropriation for Intensive Special Education Costs (former Section 53F-2-309); Early Graduation Incentives (53F-2-501); Math and Science Opportunities for Students (MOST)(former Section 53F-2-505); and Salary Supplement for National Board Certified Teachers (former Section 53F-2-521).

Amendment carried unanimously.

Motion, as amended, carried unanimously.

### **Enrollment Cap Flexibility for SY 2020-2021**

Member Belnap announced that due to a conflict she would abstain from voting and participating in the conversation.

Deputy Superintendent Stallings reported that two schools—Connections Academy and Utah Virtual Academy—made a request to the Board in late July for student enrollment increases. The schools presented their requests to the State Charter School Board (SCSB) on August 13. The SCSB passed a motion to suspend the enrollment cap provisions in the charter agreements for those schools and are seeking State Board of Education support for the action.

Jennifer Lambert, State Charter School Board Executive Director, reviewed that with the pandemic many parents are seeking online options. In June the SCSB allowed flexibility to brick and mortar schools to provide online or blended options, and this request is aligned with that flexibility. The request is appropriate because there is such a high demand for new student

enrollment in these two schools. Executive Director Lambert made it clear that the SCSB motion allows temporary flexibility in the two schools' enrollment caps for this school year only.

Cindy Phillips, SCSB Member, thanked the Board for hearing the context of the decision and expressed appreciation for the collaboration over the last few months between the two boards.

Erin Taylor, Principal, Connections Academy, shared that in these unsettling times families are frustrated with being on the school's wait list. She assured the Board that the school is ready to serve the additional students and believes the online model it already has in place will serve these families with fidelity and provide a quality education. She shared that along with the influx of student requests, there has been an influx of highly qualified teachers interested in teaching at the school.

Brian Maxwell, Board President, Utah Virtual Academy, thanked the Board for the resources provided to the Academy through the turnaround process and reported that the school has officially exited turnaround. He informed that thousands of parents are looking to Utah Virtual Academy to provide a quality education option during the pandemic. He shared that staff are confident they can serve those students in a meaningful way and have the scalability to be successful.

**MOTION** was made by Member Haynes and seconded that the Board support the State Charter School Board's motion to suspend the enrollment cap provisions of the State Charter School Board's charter agreements with Utah Connections Academy and Utah Virtual Academy for the 2020-21 school year only, including support for a temporary increase in student enrollment by 1,000 for Utah Connections Academy and 1,500 for Utah Virtual Academy for the 2020-21 school year only.

Motion carried; Member Belnap abstained.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:39 p.m.

[For additional information about items from the meeting, see General Exhibit No. 20-22.]

Lorraine Austin, Board Secretary  
Minutes approved September 3, 2020