

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
ACTING AS THE GOVERNING BOARD FOR THE
UTAH SCHOOLS FOR THE FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND**

March 8, 2019

A meeting of the Utah State Board of Education Acting as the Governing Board for the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind was held March 8, 2019 at the Utah State Board of Education Building, 250 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, Utah. Chair Mark Huntsman presided.

Members Present:

Chair Mark Huntsman
Vice Chair Brittney Cummins
Member Laura Belnap
Member Michelle Boulter
Member Cindy Davis

Member Jennie Earl
Member Alisa Ellis (by phone)
Member Carol Barlow Lear
Member Scott B. Neilson

Members Absent:

Member Jennifer Graviet
Member Janet A. Cannon
Member Lisa Cummins

Member Linda B. Hansen
Member Scott L. Hansen
Member Shawn E. Newell

USDB Executive Staff Present:

Joel Coleman, USDB Superintendent
Carolyn Lasater, Associate Supt.

Michelle Tanner, Associate Supt.
Carl Empey, Finance Director

Others Present:

Suzy Blackham—USDB; Natalie Shaw, Jackie Parrish, Jackie Ball—parents; Karen Harrop—USDB Advisory Council; Sydnee Dickson, Scott Jones, Jared Felt, Emilie Wheeler, Lorraine Austin—USBE staff; Michelle Beus, Bryan Quesenberry—Attorney General’s Office

Chair Mark Huntsman called the meeting to order at 12:50 p.m.

Monthly Budget Report

USDB Finance Director Carl Empey presented the monthly budget report as of January 31, 2019. [For additional details, see General Exhibit No. USDB19-10.]

Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOTION was made by Member Belnap and seconded that the Board approve the minutes of the February 7, 2019 meeting.

Motion carried. [For additional details, see General Exhibit No. USDB19-11.]

Public Comment

Natalie Shaw – stated that she has seen LSL parents struggling and being ignored, even after using all the proper channels at the school. Instead of an open dialogue and supporting these parents, there has been an effort to distract from the issues by turning them into American Sign Language (ASL) versus Listening and Spoken Language (LSL). The proposed policy places the administration as a filter between parents and the Board. A policy isn't needed to keep problems concealed, but communication and action. Educational materials should educate, not indoctrinate. She asked the Board to investigate USDB.

Jackie Parrish, grandmother of hard-of-hearing child – reported that her granddaughter received a cochlear implant a year ago and it has been miraculous. The family experienced the LSL-only toddler group for a short while, but it will no longer be offered in the fall. They completely support ASL-only or bimodal groups, but want the same attention and respect for the LSL-only option. She expressed that they have been ignored and felt coerced in another direction, and feels they have been lied to. She asked the Board to meet with parents that want the LSL-only option.

Jackie Ball – commented that the Board has heard a lot of passion and truth from the parents who have spoken. Parent choices were not respected by USDB administration. The proposed Procedures for Reducing Parental Concerns to be presented to the Board today will be screening parents from talking to the Board unless they have gone through a multi-step process. As a parent they are the Board's constituents, and she strongly encouraged the Board to not approve the procedure as it stands and to keep parental communication open.

Suzy Blackham, teacher of the visually impaired – distributed information from a group she formed—Unified Utah for the Education of Blind and Visually Impaired (BVI) Students. The group asks the Board to draft a policy requiring each LEA that opts to transition their BVI

students to USDB to design and submit a transition plan with input from stakeholders as outlined in the documentation. She also reported that a survey was sent to teachers of the visually impaired working in school districts, and 22 of those teachers (a large percentage) responded. Of those that responded, 100 percent supported the mission and cause of Unified Utah BVI; 41 percent opted to remain anonymous. Several other individuals have signed on to endorse the mission. [For additional details, see General Exhibit No. USDB19-12.]

LEAD-K Final Report

Associate Superintendent Michelle Tanner gave a presentation about the work of the LEAD-K (Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids) Committee. She reported that LEAD-K is a national initiative to ensure that deaf kids are kindergarten ready. She reviewed the goals of the committee and reported that the committee has developed achievement milestones that apply to all children, regardless of the ASL or LSL vantage point. Superintendent Tanner also showed a brochure LEAD-K developed to provide to doctors and early intervention agencies throughout the state.

It was questioned how the brochure is communicated to parents participating in the Parent Infant Program (PIP). Associate Superintendent Tanner responded that there are links on the brochure to the USDB website for additional information and contacts. USDB staff have recently added to its website information about the options in the PIP program with links to resources representing all modalities. The intent is to provide information on general language development, but not to sway parents toward one option.

Superintendent Tanner explained that a meeting is held prior to a child transitioning from the PIP program into school. Representatives from the school district and staff from USD representing both LSL and ASL are present to meet with the parents. The purpose of the meeting is solely to discuss the language options. At the end of the meeting parents are invited to visit the local district and Utah School for the Deaf to look at all the options. Parents may choose partial options as well. After parents have had an opportunity to observe the options, another meeting is held by the district, with USD staff participation. All meetings are documented with signatures of the parents present.

Superintendent Tanner informed that 70 percent of parents choose a Listening and Spoken Language approach; the other 30 percent are choosing an American Sign Language/English option.

[For additional details, see General Exhibit No. USDB19-13.]

USDB Advisory Council Report

Karen Harrop, USDB Advisory Council Chair, reported to the Board about the work of the Council since November 2018 to address parent concerns that have come to the Advisory Council and the Board. Parents have requested that USDB establish a separate Listening and Spoken Language (LSL)-only toddler group to create a network of support for those parents and provide guidance. The Advisory Council has seriously considered the request, and she also attended the toddler group to see how the services were being delivered.

The USDB Advisory Council recommends the following:

1. Using the existing resources in the toddler group and restructuring the group as follows: 1) dedicate the first half hour to LSL-only; 2) dedicate the next hour to the bi-modal option; 3) dedicate the last half hour to ASL-only. Parents would be able to attend all sections if they wish. The Council does not recommend different toddler groups.

The Council hopes this restructuring will address the needs of the community within the existing structures and resources. The Council also acknowledges that the toddler group is an optional resource that does not replace or act as direct services for the child.

2. Training on effective co-teaching practices for ASL and LSL teachers.

Ms. Harrop noted that the Council is interested in seeing what the attendance would look like in a pilot of this structure. Currently, there is low attendance in the number of children using the LSL-only model; if attendance increases and there is a need, the program could be expanded. Another option to explore is whether the location of the toddler group needs to change.

Associate Superintendent Tanner indicated USDB will explore the recommendations and idea of doing a pilot. She reported that there is an LSL-only toddler group in Orem, and an ASL/English group in the Salt Lake area.

Procedures for Resolving Parental Concerns

Chair Huntsman left the meeting and turned the gavel over to Vice Chair Brittney Cummins.

Superintendent Joel Coleman stated that the Procedures for Resolving Parental Concerns was developed to provide an administrative framework and structure to handle general complaints, but was never intended to preclude individuals from speaking to their elected officials. It was developed with the intent of providing a way for parents to get help without having to go to the top.

He informed that this does not address concerns handled by a student's IEP (Individualized Education Plan). He also indicated that he will have the Advisory Council review the process.

Board member suggestions included: Removing 4.4, 1.4 and 3.3; reworking 3.2 in a way that opens up communication; changing 3.4 to say "offered" instead of "appropriate;" rewording 5.1 to say, "is invited to resolve;" address parents rather than employees in 5.2; change wording in 3.2 similar to, "USDB encourages individuals to provide their names so we can solve the problems;" removing the word, "shall," where possible; making it less legalistic and more user friendly; adding a statement that this is a best practices model.

Assistant Attorney General Michelle Beus indicated she will work with Superintendent Coleman on the policy, and Vice Chair Cummins directed that the updated procedures come back to the Board in April.

Chair Huntsman acknowledged that it is typical when responding to constituents to ask if they have talked with leaders at the local level in order to get any problems resolved as quickly as possible.

[For additional details, see General Exhibit No. USDB19-14.]

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Coleman reported that he is waiting for the finalization of legislative appropriations and legislation concerning USDB.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Lorraine Austin, Board Secretary
Minutes approved April 5, 2019