

Uplift Michigan Online School  
Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, September 24, 2020  
6:00 p.m. Eastern Time

601 Fifth St NW Suite 500  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

1. Meeting called to order by President Jeff Bell at 6:02 pm

Roll Call

- a. Board Members Present: Jeff Bell, Mary Harwood, Denise Kish, Brian Wood (arrived during financial report)
  - b. Call-in: Robert Giordano, Travis Gostinger, Tonya Lowry, Victoria Malone, Doug McNeil, Max Shafik, Tim Wood
  - c. In person: none
2. Pledge of Allegiance
  3. Statement of Purpose
  4. Adoption of Agenda
    - a. Motion to approve with the removal of Item 6 and sub-items (Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan and ECLP Public Comment) by Jeff Bell, seconded by Denise Kish, all members – aye, motion carried
  5. Public Comment/Correspondence
    - a. No public comment
    - b. Received correspondence from HyperFocus. Legal counsel is currently reviewing.
    - c. Received notice from the Department of Education about the Corrective Action Plan that was submitted. It has been approved. All three CAPs have been sufficiently addressed.
  6. Approval of Minutes from the regular Board meeting from August 27, 2020
    - a. Motion to approve by Jeff Bell, seconded by Denise Kish, all members – aye, motion carried
  7. Approval of Finance Reports
    - a. Motion to approve as presented by Denise Kish, seconded by Jeff Bell, all members – aye, motion carried
  8. Leadership Update
    - a. Management Update
      - i. State Funding
        - Foundation allowance will remain at \$8,111 with an additional \$66 per student as a one-time categorical. For growing schools, the 75/25 funding model will remain in place, but the difference will be made up in a separate category. Waiting on Governor Whitmer’s signature.
        - Once the final funding numbers are available, an updated budget will be presented to the Board
      - ii. Enrollment and Staffing
        - The enrollment cap will remain in place for the time being.

- Hiring is in process for several positions that need to be filled.
- Denise Kish: Are live lessons being offered? Was the advisory model supposed to be in addition to Live Lessons or replace Live Lessons  
 Tonya Lowry: Live lessons are offered more frequently at the elementary level (K-2, 1 per day; 3-5, every other day) and less frequently at the middle/high school level due to current staffing levels. Advisory is still working fantastically. Communication with families has increased significantly this year. Increasing staffing will help to offer more live lessons. Travis Gostinger: Just because fewer Live Lessons are being offered, engagement has ramped up from what it used to be by adding Advisory. We changed the model to make sure students know they are supported and connected. The engagement piece is not missing. It is important to all staff.
- Denise Kish: What is the instructional coach's responsibility? What qualifications do they need? Tim Wood: The instructional coach is an extra adult who is able to assist the teacher as needed. Travis Gostinger: The instructional coach is not required to have an education degree because they are not providing instruction. We hire those who have qualifications to help with engagement and follow-up and have a positive personality. They are additional help and support to families to make sure the program is running smoothly.
- Robert Giordano: Reflect back on last year and data shows two-way engagement increased and there were improvements in academic success. Discussions are happening every week about what needs to be done as enrollment increases. Student engagement is on the forefront of our minds.
- Travis Gostinger: Uplift has the flexibility for students to complete their tasks and their school without the rigidity of traditional schooling. Uplift offers the best of both worlds and the staff as a whole is working to keep the flexible model and maintain high academic standards. Tonya Lowry: Live Lessons in virtual looks different than traditional school. In virtual, teachers have time in their schedules to meet outside of Advisory and Live Lessons, to offer help sessions and to discuss key concepts. Students also can attend Friday Fun Days, study sessions, 1:1 meetings with their teachers, etc. A check-in survey was recently sent out and so far families are overwhelmingly happy with the way things are going this year.

b. K-12 Overview

- i. Enrollment specifics
  - 448 currently enrolled
  - 184 waiting list
- ii. A number of students who were dual enrolled have since decided to stay in their home district. Parents expressed that they enjoyed Uplift but full-time virtual was not a good fit for their family.
- iii. Waiting list families have been contacted that spots are available and marketing has been restarted.
- iv. Jeff Bell: What are the ideal student/teacher rations? Tonya Lowry: Ideally, 150-175 students per teacher is reasonable. If more Live Lessons are to be offered, a

lower student/teacher ratio is needed. Over 200 students per teacher makes individual connections and engagement very challenging.

- v. Student/Teacher Interactions
  - Two-way communication requirements: Cyber schools are exempt from this requirement. Uplift was tracking this requirement until additional guidance was received. 85% of students were tracked as having two (2) two-way communications.
  - 90% of students have connected with their teachers.
  - Passing rates look good with two weeks of content.
  - Over 70% of students are attending Advisory.
- vi. We are continuing to work toward the goals for the COVID Extended Learning Plan even though it is no longer required for cyber schools.

9. Board Strategy and Planning

- a. Board Policy Updates (Policy 5610 & 5611) - for adoption
  - i. Revisions to Title IX policy for due process for gender identity students in regards to expulsion and suspension. Recommended by National Charter School Institute's attorneys to change the language from "clear and convincing evidence" to "preponderance of evidence."
  - ii. With an approval, the policy manual will, then, be complete and usernames and passwords will be provided to board members.
  - iii. Motion to approve Policies 5610 and 5611 by Jeff Bell, seconded by Brian Wood, all members – aye, motion carried

10. Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn at 7:06 pm by Jeff Bell, seconded by Mary Harwood, all members - aye, motion carried

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Harwood, Board Secretary