

Uplift Michigan Online School  
Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, March 25, 2021  
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 6:01 pm

Roll Call

- a. Board Members Present: Jeff Bell, Mary Harwood, Denise Kish, Paul Marineau
  - b. Call-in: Robert Giordano, Travis Gostinger, Mary Kennedy, Tonya Lowry, Victoria Malone, Doug McNeil, Max Shafik, Tim Wood
  - c. In person: none
2. Pledge of Allegiance
  3. Statement of Purpose
  4. Regular Business
    - a. Adoption of Agenda
      - i. Motion to approve by Mary Harwood, seconded by Denise Kish, all members – aye, motion carried
    - b. Public Comment
      - i. No public comment
    - c. Correspondence
      - i. Received confirmation from MDE that the Corrective Action Plan from previous years has been completed and is now closed. Uplift is fully compliant.
    - d. Approval of Minutes from the regular Board meeting from February 25, 2021 with the correction under section 5/a/vi to add “potential 20% cut”.
      - i. Motion to approve by Denise Kish, seconded by Jeff Bell, all members – aye, motion carried
    - e. Approval of Finance Reports
      - i. Motion to approve as presented by Denise Kish, seconded by Paul Marineau, all members – aye, motion carried
  5. Leadership Update
    - a. Management
      - i. MDHHS has recently updated an order that requires in-person meetings for public bodies, including Uplift, to resume in April. Our next meeting will be in person unless given approval to continue virtually.
    - b. Enrollment Update
      - i. New enrollment lead generation was started a couple of weeks ago and there are currently 374 leads. Goal is to enroll 9 students per week. The bulk of the students will be enrolled in June, July and August, but there’s no need to wait to reach potential families.
      - ii. 171 students currently enrolled for next year (167 returning, 4 new)
      - iii. 106 current students are undecided. Many intended to return to in-person learning, but have had a good experience with Uplift and are struggling with the decision.

- iv. It's a challenge to predict enrollment numbers. Enrollment was higher this year due to COVID-19 and the number of students was overwhelming. Uplift doesn't plan to be a large school, but growing to and sustaining 450-600 students will allow us to expand our options and continue to offer quality programs (CTE, AP, etc.)

c. K-12 Overview

- i. 2021-2022 School Calendar was presented to the board.
  - Dates for State Testing are TBD in case current spring state assessments are shifted in any way to the fall.
  - Motion to approve 2021-2022 School Calendar by Jeff Bell, seconded by Mary Harwood, all members – aye, motion carried
- ii. Uplift has the potential opportunity to create a partnership and pen pal program with Onarubi School in Nigeria. Tonya and Uche Uchendu have been working with the principal & staff at Onarubi. Parental permission will be obtained and all communication will be closely monitored to make sure appropriate information is being sent and received. Staff will review letters before sharing with students. This will extend our school mission to train students on a global world view. The program will take some time to set it all up. We will make sure to get all information to students and parents to opt in. We will have a trial period either during the beginning of next year or at the end of this year.
- iii. NWEA
  - Winter testing is complete. Spring testing will take place in May.
  - Students are continuing to make a lot of progress/gains each year.
- iv. Passing Rates
  - Passing is 60% or higher in a course
  - Significant growth from last school year with interventions and supports that have been put in place.
  - 20% growth in the fall semester
  - 30% growth so far in Spring and we still have 2 months to go.
- v. School Culture
  - On a scale of 1 to 4, most students rated well above a 3.5 across the board when asked to rate the support, community, and how they feel about compassion and care they're receiving from staff
- vi. Parent/Teacher Conferences
  - 71% of parents attended in February and March
- vii. Pride Plans
  - 69% of students' Pride Plans are completed. Pride Plans contain future goals, how they feel about themselves, academic data towards graduation
- viii. Graduation
  - 4 students graduated after first semester
  - 20 more students are set to graduate in the spring
  - 4 of the 20 students will be able to walk at graduation, but will need to finish courses in summer school.
- ix. State Assessments
  - Unsure if testing will take place, but planning for it to happen. Families are worried about COVID and are refusing to bring their students to testing. If assessments do happen, we are unsure if we will be able to reach the 95% requirement for accountability, should that stand.

- d. Board Strategy and Planning
  - i. Board Terms will expire after 4 years Uplift board member terms will be staggered moving forward. The following seats are available:
    - 2 or 3 2-year board terms interchangeable
    - 2 or 3 4-year board terms interchangeable
  - ii. Mission, Vision, Discussion conversation that was originally planned for this meeting will wait until after the board members decide if they will be staying.
  - iii. Current board member decisions (if no decision is given, please let Jeff Bell know):
    - Jeff Bell will be stepping down after June 2022
    - Denise Kish will be stepping down after June 2022
    - Mary Harwood - unsure
    - Brian Wood was not present at meeting to respond
  - iv. Charter school boards can have up to 7 board members. Discussion about adding 2 more board members soon in order to have a smooth transition with officers after June 2022.
- e. Adjournment
  - i. Motion to adjourn at 7:16 pm by Denise Kish, seconded by Paul Marineau, all members – aye, motion carried

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Harwood, Board Secretary