

Uplift Michigan Online School  
Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, May 27, 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 6:04 pm

Roll Call

- a. Board Members Present: Jeff Bell, Denise Kish, Paul Marineau, Brian Wood
  - b. Call-in: Robert Giordano, Travis Gostinger, Mary Kennedy, Tonya Lowry, Victoria Malone, 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 Denise Kish, seconded by Paul Marineau, all members – aye, motion carried
    - b. Public Comment
      - i. No public comment
    - c. Correspondence
      - i. Special Education Corrective Action Plan is closed and we are compliant for this year.
    - d. Approval of Minutes from the regular Board meeting from April 22, 2021
      - i. Motion to approve by Denise Kish, seconded by Paul Marineau, all members – aye, motion carried
    - e. Approval of Finance Reports
      - i. Motion to approve as presented by Jeff Bell, seconded by Brian Wood, all members – aye, motion carried
  5. Leadership Update
    - a. Enrollment & Marketing Update
      - i. Currently 74.79% of our current students are returning. Goal is set to 80%. This does not count graduating students or students who informed us that they would not be returning due to Covid 19.
      - ii. New leads are being generated. There is currently a struggle to convert leads to applicants and enrolled students. Management has put a plan in place to address this situation.
      - iii. Conversations were had with HubSpot, but a deal was unable to be reached. Jeff Bell requested that NextLvl contact Active Campaign as a possible alternative.
      - iv. Staff is absolutely fantastic. They are so goal driven and work hard to reach goals that are set.
    - b. Budget
      - i. Max Shafik presented the proposed budget for the 2021/2022 School Year.
      - ii. There is a cushion in the budget to cover things such as increased insurance expenses.

- iii. Travis Gostinger recommended a cash flow note to guarantee the school will have enough funds during the month of September when state aid is not provided. There is no fee besides the application and closing fee. If the funds are not used, no extra charges will be due.
- iv. Motion to approve moving forward with application for a cash flow note by Denise Kish, seconded by Jeff Bell, all members – aye, motion carried
- c. Board Approved Auditor
  - i. Paul Marineau: Is it a sound practice to change auditors to get some fresh eyes on it and to make new recommendations or is it better to keep the same firm for familiarity?
  - ii. Max Shafik: Keeping one firm gives more stability and they know the school's strengths and weaknesses. This helps to control costs because they don't need to relearn the school. New firms do provide fresh eyes but also need to dig into things which can increase the cost as they dig in and learn the school.
  - iii. Motion to approve Croskey Lanni, PC as Uplift's financial audit firm by Jeff Bell, seconded by Paul Marineau, all members – aye, motion carried
- d. K-12 Overview
  - i. Graduation Requirements
    - Uplift would like to offer a third graduation path for students in the form of the Fundamental Diploma. It is an 18-credit track that would be an alternative path for students who are severely credit deficient (4 or more credits deficient toward graduation). Students would take most or all credit recovery (CR) courses. CR classes do affect a student's transcript. The Guidance Counselor would review qualifications and with Admin approval would recommend this path for the student. This option would not be marketed and would be offered on a case-by-case basis.

Students approved for this path would take six courses per semester, two classes at a time on a 6-week rotation. This will change their FTE status which will need to be approved by the Board. Two courses would be approved for Count Day. Students would take two Visual/Performing/Applied Arts credits instead of one.

- Also asking for the Honors Diploma name to be changed to Advanced Diploma.
- Discussion:
  - a. This path allows students to give more focus on fewer courses and hopefully help them to be more successful.
  - b. Why wouldn't we offer two courses on rotation for every student? Students would not earn enough credits for the Standard Diploma and would not be well accepted by most colleges and universities. Students have to have four years of schooling. Eighteen credits only represents three years of schooling. We would not be meeting expectations. The standard track is the best route to give students the opportunity to go to college.
  - c. The Fundamental Diploma is acceptable with the Armed Forces. It does meet Michigan's minimum standards.
  - d. Staffing: Plan is to cohort the students in the Fundamental Diploma path. The recommendation is to hire someone as a teacher of record to oversee and maintain these courses.

- e. Motion to approve the updated graduation requirements to include the fundamental pathway tracks by Denise Kish, seconded by Brian Wood, all members – aye, motion carried
  - f. Superintendent Lowry reviewed how the FTE definitions would be updated to meet pupil accounting regulations.
  - g. Motion to approve the FTE definitions by Brian Wood, seconded by Paul Marineau, all members – aye, motion carried
- e. Board Strategy and Planning
- i. Discussion about Board terms:
    - Jeff Bell would be willing to stay on as a member with an unnamed position with someone else as the Board president for one extra year to help transition the new members.
    - The discussion on Board terms can be done outside of this meeting and decided at June’s Board meeting.
    - Denise Kish recommends having a combination of term lengths. There should be more movement of offices than what we have had.
    - Max Shafik: Consider the President and Treasurer are authorized signers at the bank. Templates need to be created for signing and time needs to be given so there is enough time to prepare for that change.
    - Tim Wood: If everyone would like to stay in their current positions for a staggered number of terms, Nextlvl would greatly appreciate that as they feel we have an amazing Board.
- f. Adjournment
- i. Motion to adjourn at 7:14 pm by Paul Marineau, seconded by Denise Kish, all members – aye, motion carried

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Harwood, Board Secretary