



**ATHLOS  
ACADEMY**  
**ATHLOS ACADEMY OF UTAH  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Date: February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: 12309 South Mustang Trail Way, Herriman, UT 84096, Room 124

**Attendance:**

Andy Lavin:	<b>Present</b>	Absent
Todd Bingham:	<b>Present</b>	Absent
Eric Christensen:	<b>Present</b>	Absent
Bethany Zeyer:	<b>Present</b>	Absent
Josh Cummings:	<b>Present</b>	Absent
Rob Ninow:	<b>Present</b>	Absent
Jeana Bonner:	<b>Present</b>	Absent

Others Present (list): Esther Blackwell, Jeff Gunther, Andrea Thomas-Reynolds, Jacinta Sanders, Camille Wells, Rich Eccles, Alan Anderson

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***Standing Items***

Called to order at: **6:08pm**

*Approval of Virtual Meeting Participation: N/A*

***Minutes***

Motion to *Approve Meeting Minutes Pending Addition of Missing Motion to Enter Closed Session* by:  
Josh  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: Bethany

Bethany noted that the minutes from last month were missing a motion to enter closed session.

For: **5**

Against: **0**

Abstain: **2** (Eric & Todd who were not yet present)

***Public Comment***

None

***Board Development***

*By Camille Wells, Chief Community Relations Officer @ Athlos HQ – Community Relations*

Camille trained the board on key points regarding community relations, those being Message Development, Media Relations and Public Records Requests. Key points included communicating frequently, responding promptly, and emphasizing the benefit to students.



After Camille's presentation, Bethany asked about parental complaints. Camille explained that parental complaints aren't a public records request, but that we should try and respond within a day.

Jeff added that we should remember that parents will often take what members of the board say as official, so we should keep that in mind.

## ***Director's Report***

*By Director Esther Blackwell*

Esther made a report to the board that included pictures and a review of fun events at the school, upcoming calendar items, and the current number of students enrolled.

Josh asked if there were any events that Esther would like to see the board at, and she identified the enrollment event on March 6<sup>th</sup> and Student-Led Conferences on March 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

Esther then reported on how the school is working on its message for middle school as well as mid-year DIBELS performance. Grades K-3 underperformed on the mid-year DIBELS, and Esther explained that there is evaluation underway of the current curriculum and having an increased emphasis on the Prepared Mind pillar. Esther and the school's goal is to have students performing at a half-grade ahead of grade level in Math and Reading.

The board had several questions for Esther including

- how the children are leveled – Esther explained that iReady levels the kids for math and reading, and Jeff explained that scores tend to be linear to about 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a grade level
- what role should the board have in selecting, advising, or approving programs that are used at the school – Jeff explained that the board ought to question the school leader on program choices and Andrea suggested regularly assessing the monitoring being done
- whether or not it is effective to compare schools following the Athlos model in other states – no answer was given, though Andrea asserted that assessments ought to be tailored to state standards, which might make it tricky to compare school results

Esther gave a detailed outline of specific changes. The board asked questions about

- computer time usage – Esther explained that not all programs that the teachers use have a reporting system built in, so she's moved to having an approved list of programs that teachers can use with their students
- how Esther is striking the balance between directing teaching style and giving teachers autonomy – Esther explained that teachers who are demonstrating results can be given more autonomy
- how teachers are handling the shift and the extra burdens – Esther explained that this is a heavy lift and there is the potential to destabilize things. Teachers can burn out. There are some already-challenged teachers who are already feeling a lot of burden, however our better teachers are excited by the challenge
- how does the school plan on assessing the strategies employed while changing so many things at once – Esther explained that the school doesn't have the luxury at this time to just change one or two things at a time

## ***Athlos Report***



*By Jeff Gunther & Andrew Thomas-Reynolds*

Jeff reported that Athlos HQ had given Community Relations support, Pillars support, and Operations support this month. He took a moment to highlight that Athlos HQ is helping develop summer camp guidelines

Andrea reported on her efforts to assess what Athlos HQ can do to better help school boards. She specifically talked about a company called “Board on Track” and offered that Board on Track could present to the board in April, to which the board communicated that they were open to that.

Andrea also welcomed Athlos HQ’s new Finance Director, Jacinta Sanders.

### ***Monthly Enrollment Report***

*By Jeff Gunther*

Jeff reported on how enrollment is looking for next year and showed that the enrollment numbers are tracking the same as last year so far. Discussion surrounded how to interpret the data, including questions about what percentage of those on the waitlist are siblings.

Alan added that we should remember that funding is about 9 months out, so at the beginning of 2018-2019, we will still have an operating budget of 870 students while having over 1000 students.

Bethany asked that we post something to Facebook explaining how the lottery works, and Jeff said he would put that on his list for todos for next time.

### ***Monthly Financial Report***

*By Jeff Gunther*

Jeff reported on Athlos Utah’s financial outlook. Currently, we are netting \$180k with an anticipated net of \$280k by the end of the fiscal year.

Todd had several questions during the Financial Committee meeting, which Jeff researched and answered to the board. Questions centered around how certain wages are being allocated from which line items, how health benefits are tracking for the year, and why line item 173 was running high.

The board did not accept the financials in this meeting because there was a \$5000 discrepancy, which will be corrected by next board meeting.

### ***Finance Committee Report***

*By Eric Christensen*

See above

### ***FACE Committee Report***

*By Rob Ninow*

No report, committee did not meet



## ***Academics Committee Report***

*By Jeanna Bonner*

Jeanna Deferred to a discussion point in the agenda for her report

## ***Governance Committee Report***

*By Josh Cummings*

Reported on the policies that the committee reviewed

## ***Discussion Items***

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### ***Student Performance***

*By Esther Blackwell & Jeff Gunther*

The board discussed the lower performance on mid-year DIBELS and explanations as well as actions that could be taken. The discussion focused around how much does chronic absence contribute to the lower performance and how well teachers are using provided curriculum and programs to help students.

The board discussed what the school can do to better to share truancy information in a helpful light without appearing condescending, including making data more available to parents and revisiting the minimum absence reporting threshold. Also discussed was whether teachers are typically handing out homework to parents who advise teachers of their students' absence in advance.

Also discussed was a report that Jeff put together about how effective the DIBELS assessment tools were by comparing usage by teacher to student performance. The report demonstrated a somewhat positive correlation that the more a teacher used the assessment tools, the better the students did.

Finally, it was brought up by the board that teachers should feel like they can be honest with their assessments. Both Eric and Josh raised anecdotes where it seemed like their children's grades were not representative of each of their students' performance.

### ***Land Trust Report***

*By Esther Blackwell*

Todd and Jeff took some time to educate and remind the board on what the Land Trust was, and then Jeff reported on the amount of money available to Athlos this year.

### ***Matriculation Agreement Update***

*By Bethany Zeyer*

Bethany reported that she emailed Ryan and learned that the Jordan School District really wants to be involved in any decision regarding any agreement with the Real Salt Lake Academy.

Rob was tasked to get the conversation with RSLA started again since we haven't had any active discussion with them since January.



## ***Policy Revisions Review (5108, 5702)***

*By Jeff Gunther*

Jeff reported on changes that the Governance Committee recommended to various policies.

There was discussion about how we can specify good driving behaviors without being prescriptive. Alan offered that we reword the policy and tie it back to the mandates of the insurance policy. There were also some questions about how many leaders are necessary in each vehicle and how does statute define large passenger vans.

## ***2018-2019 Calendar***

*By Esther Blackwell*

The board discussed the idea of starting school one week earlier and ending one week earlier than Jordan School District, the merit being that if there are no-shows on day one of school, it gives the school a couple of days to contact additional waitlisted students before JSD starts. Esther is concerned about it being too early for teachers since they start before the kids.

There was some concern whether this particular optimization is necessary.

The board settled on putting out a survey to parents, giving them two options, one that starts school on August 15<sup>th</sup> and ends the Friday before Memorial Day, and the other being matching up with JSD.

## ***Student-Led Conferences***

*By Bethany Zeyer*

Discussion from the board centered around the opportunity that parents need to have face-to-face time with the teacher. Esther supported this notion with the understanding that the student will still drive the conversation.

The idea that Esther is working with right now is having an open house in the gym where parents sign up for a time slot.

## ***Action Items***

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### ***Appoint Records Custodian***

*By Bethany Zeyer*

Jeff explained what a Records Custodian is and Todd proposed that the secretary take on the responsibility.

Motion to *Appoint the Records Custodian as the Secretary* by **Todd**

Second: **Eric**

For: **7**

Against: **0**

## ***Policy Revisions***



*By Jeff Gunther*

Jeff reviewed changes already discussed in the previous board meeting.

Motion to *Approve Policy Revisions (5501, 5701, 6203, 6204)* by **Todd**

Second: **Josh**

For: **7**

Against: **0**

### ***Grade Level Caps***

*by Esther Blackwell*

Esther proposed a set of grade level caps for the coming year.

The board discussed what can be done about first grade and whether or not class-size is a contributing factor for underperformance. Esther noted that moving the cap for first grade to allow for smaller class sizes would bump up the others and hiring another first-grade teacher might not be an option. She also noted that we could choose to not backfill first grade if we happen to be under-enrolled there.

The board also brought up whether we can charge for full day kindergarten, which we cannot, by law.

The board then affirmed the need for managed, controlled growth, keeping in mind fiscal impacts due to funding lag and class size impacts,

Motion to *Accept the Grade Level Caps* by **Rob**

Second: **Todd**

For: **7**

Against: **0**

Motion to *Go Into Closed Session* by **Todd**

Second: **Josh**

For: **7**

Against: **0**

Motion to *Reopen* by **Andy**

Second: **Todd**

For: **7**

Against: **0**

*Adjournment:*

Motion to *Adjourn at 9:36p* by **Todd**