Trust Advisory Committee

Draft Minutes

November 26, 2018

Attending: Jay Blain, Superintendent Cade Douglas, Carolyn White, Nancy Kennedy, Sarah Thomas (by phone), Susan Edwards, Jason Theler, Shawn McLeod, Karen Rupp, Natalie Gordon, Paula Plant

Excused: Tyler Slack

Not Present: Dawn Davies, Derek Anderson, Steven Davis, Jennifer Mayer-Glenn

Karen Rupp welcomed the committee.

Carolyn White made a motion to approve the minutes of October 29, 2018. Nancy Kennedy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Karen Rupp drew the committee’s attention to the SITLA Board of Trustees meeting summary and the Land Trust Protection and Advocacy Committee meeting summary which were previously emailed to the committee.

The committee reaffirmed support for the recommendation to the Utah State Board of Education opposing allowing non-custodial grandparents to serve as parent members of School Community Councils. Cade Douglas made a motion to present the statement to USBE Leadership as written. Jay Blain seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The committee discussed the draft carryover procedure. A suggestion was made to send the list of schools with greater than 10% carryover to both the district contacts as designated on SchoolLANDTrust.org, and the district superintendent, and to suggest that the district contact principals of schools with greater than 10% carryover to offer training and support.

In discussing the draft letter, it was suggested that the letter be amended to:

* Recommend the principal share the letter with the SCC.
* Outline the overarching priority that money distributed through the School LAND Trust program during the current school year be spent on current students.
* Notify the principal that if the council desires carrying more than 10% of the distribution from one year to the next, it must be stated either in the approved plan or in an amendment to the plan to ensure the carryover has been approved by the local school board.
* Explain that because of new distribution procedures, the per-district distribution will be finalized earlier, and there will not be an increase between the estimated distribution that is disclosed in January and the actual distribution that is received in July.

Carolyn White made a motion to approve the letter and procedure with suggested amendments, and present the documents to the USBE Audit Committee in the December Audit Committee meeting. Jason Theler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

If the USBE Audit Committee approves the procedure and letter, it is anticipated that the lists and letters could be distributed by the end of the year.

Cade Douglas asked Natalie Gordon to complete the amendments and email a copy of the documents to him by the end of the week to present to USSA. Other committee members also requested a copy as soon as possible.

ASSIGNMENT: Natalie Gordon will complete the amendments to the procedure and letter and send them to the committee before end-of-day 11/30. Natalie will also prepare a memo for the USBE Audit Committee, and present the procedure to the committee at the December 19th meeting.

Cade Douglas led the discussion on online school carryover. The School LAND trust program requires measurable academic improvement, and some online schools do not measure progress. Overhead costs for online schools are less than traditional schools. It is expected that School LAND Trust funds will supplement not supplant education funding, and many online schools have a difficult time identifying needs that will supplement funding and increase student performance. TAC would like to recommend to USBE that they create a taskforce to review the needs of online and hybrid-online schools regarding School LAND Trust program funding. The membership of the recommended task force should be equitable, and could include representatives from district/charter schools, rural/urban areas, UASBO, USSA, USBA, and SCC chairs.

ASSIGNMENT: Natalie Gordon will draft a statement recommending a task force to USBE, which the committee can use to start discussion. This item will be an action item on the January TAC agenda.

Natalie Gordon directed the committee to the job descriptions from the SchoolLANDTrust.org website. The descriptions were sent to committee members earlier this year for amendment. Susan Edwards proposed that the descriptions be sent again for review, and added as an action item for the January TAC agenda.

ASSIGNMENT: Natalie Gordon will send copies for committee members to review and propose changes. The amended job descriptions will be an action item on the January TAC agenda.

Paula Plant asked the committee members if any had received feedback regarding Representative Stratton’s proposal to allow SCCs to review, discuss and spend a portion of an individual school’s School LAND Trust distribution on school safety. Committee members raised the following concerns:

* The committee should not recommend appropriations that differ from already proposed school safety appropriations.
* Current state board rule does not allow School LAND Trust funds for safety.
* Safety does not meet the legislative intent for the program, because it is not tied to measurable academic improvement.
* Councils would be making decisions that are best left to school districts to consider holistically. Councils could recommend safety needs to districts.
* These decisions are safer and more cost effective when made at a district level, and they should be research-based solutions.
* The USBE change to the rule that allowed funds to be spent on behavioral interventions as part of an academic goal both meets current legislative requirements and allows for ongoing safety needs that can be addressed through social workers, counselors, etc.
* Like Digital Citizenship, this issue could be discussed with a report from the district to the council explaining what is being done, with an opportunity for councils to reply with recommendations.
* There is a concern about open discussions on school safety; in board meetings, safety issues are often discussed in closed session to prevent sensitive information from being disseminated that may compromise safety programs.
* Vendors may reach out to council members and interest them in expenditures that do not meet district-identified needs.
* SCCs should know about the physical and emotional safety of students in the school, and can already address behavioral needs.

ASSIGNMENT: Paula Plant will share the committee concerns with Representative Stratton.

In other business, Carolyn White was concerned about Beaver and Garfield County opposition to recent SITLA land sales, and asked Paula Plant to discuss better communication between SITLA and county commissioners with her contacts at SITLA.

The committee schedule for the upcoming year was discussed, and it was decided that the committee would meet on the fourth Monday of the month at noon, with no meeting in February. The January 28, 2019 meeting will be at noon in the Beehive Room of the Utah State Capitol.

The meeting was adjourned.