Trust Advisory Committee

Draft Minutes

August 19th, 2019

Members Present: Nancy Kennedy, Cade Douglas, Mary Wohlforth, Susan Edwards, Liz Mumford, Carolyn White, Lark Reynolds, Shawn McLeod, Sarah Thomas (phone)

Excused: Jay Blain, Steve Davis, Jennifer Meyer-Glenn.

USBE Staff: Paula Plant, Natalie Gordon, Karen Rupp, Ben Rasmussen

Other: Justin Atwater, Director LTPAO; Jessie Stewart, LTPAO

Nancy Kennedy welcomed the committee.

The committee discussed upcoming meeting dates. It was decided to move the meeting scheduled October 21st to October 28th to avoid fall break.

Carolyn White made a motion to approve the minutes of June 17, 2019. Cade Douglas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee members introduced themselves to Mary Wohlforth, the new Elementary Principal representative.

Director Justin Atwater of the Land Trust Protection and Advocacy Office updated the committee on the Multi-Beneficiary Policy that was adopted by the SITLA Board on August 14, 2019. Justin also pointed out that the LTPAO is also tasked with educating the public regarding the School Trust System. He is grateful for the work of the education community in assisting.

Cade Douglas told Justin that there were some superintendents that were frustrated because they were working with SITLA to purchase land for schools and were expected to pay current appraised value. Justin noted that it was on his radar, and he had been talking with SITLA and Alpine School District. Susan Edwards explained that if a district didn’t pay full market value, the beneficiaries would be harmed because the beneficiaries are not the individual districts but K-12 education as a whole.

The committee discussed a recent suggestion to combine the School LAND Trust program with TSSA. Cade stated that he had not found it difficult for principals to keep them separate. Carolyn informed the committee that at their last meeting the USBA had discussed combining the plans, but a motion to do so was not supported. Liz Mumford sees the plans as complimentary, and states that keeping the School LAND Trust program separate honors local decision making. Nancy is concerned that the School LAND Trust program funds would become lost in an amorphous pot of funding and believes that they should remain separate.

Cade made a motion to recommend to the Utah State Board of Education that the board advocate for the TSSA and School LAND Trust programs and funds to remain separate. Carolyn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Nancy will work with staff to draft a letter of recommendation to the board.

Paula Plant informed the group that Digital ResponsAbility had received the contract from the Attorney General’s Office Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. The contract was previously held by NetSmartz. The new program includes trainers coming in to meet with individual classes. School-wide assemblies were not part of the RFP that was accepted. The committee agreed that the School Children’s Trust section should continue to notify schools on free resources to assist with the digital citizenship/safety requirement.

The School Safety workgroup has almost completed their documents for SchoolLANDTrust.org. Liz Mumford added that the documents have been simplified, and clearly outline a council’s role and responsibility. They are broader than active shooter discussions, and include transportation, emotional and social health, and digital safety. Paula will forward them to the committee later this week when they are complete.

Paula advised the committee that there had been some discussion about legislation to raise the 3% of the MSP cap on the School LAND Trust program distribution. The distribution is currently approaching 1.7%. Part of the discussion when the cap was raised from 2% to 3% included legislators that were concerned that, in the future, the distribution may be “too much.” Before a change can happen, it should be determined if there should be a limit on School LAND Trust program spending, and if so, what should be done with the additional funds. It was decided that School Children’s Trust staff continue to calculate and track the distribution as percentage of Minimum School Program, and report back annually.

Natalie Gordon led a discussion on maintaining the integrity of School LAND Trust program funds, and the definition of academic. Committee members stated the importance of focusing on the greatest academic need and reviewing assessment data before preparing goals to keep goals student focused, measurable and academic, and prevent plans from becoming wish lists. Some members suggested prioritizing certain subjects or considering a percentage that can be used for sporting equipment/art/music. Committee members will discuss this with their groups and bring back ideas. Paula will draft a proposed rework of R277-477, and the committee will discuss this further in the next meeting. For a change to be in place before plans are written for 2020-2021, the committee will need to have something to present to the Board before November.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15.