

Uplift Education Board Meeting
Tuesday, March 31, 2020 at 8 a.m.

Pursuant to Governor Abbott’s March 16, 2020 Order approving a request by the Office of the Attorney General to temporarily suspend a limited number of open meeting laws in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) disaster, governmental bodies may conduct meetings by telephone or video conference to advance the public health goal of limiting face-to-face meetings (also called “social distancing”) to slow the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). In compliance with Governor Abbott’s order, and in furtherance of the public health goal of limiting face-to-face meetings, this meeting of the Uplift Board was held telephonically at the following toll-free number and access code: 1-888-800-6000, 649-785-895.

Called to Order: 8:05 a.m.

Adjourned: 9:06 a.m.

Governors Present:

1. Ryan Moss
2. Richard Frapart
3. Josh Terry
4. Dawn Mann
5. Cathy Estrada
6. Cameron Johnson
7. Ardo Fuentes
8. Ed Tauriac
9. Andre McEwing
10. Lael Melville
11. John McPherson

<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS</i>	<i>ACTIONS</i>
I. Call to Order and Announcements	A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m. by the chair, R. Moss. R. Moss welcomed staff and the Board to the meeting and discussed the unique circumstances of conducting the meeting telephonically.	
II. Update on Uplift Education’s response to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19	<p>Y. Bhatia provided a review of Uplift’s response to COVID-19 and discussed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Closure of Schools</u>: Uplift made the decision to close its schools and facilities over Spring Break, so the closure began effective March 16, 2020. 2. <u>First 2 weeks of closure</u>: Uplift operated “remote learning 1.0.” During this time, the objective was to try and get a sense of where our scholars were at and what they were doing at home. R. Washington organized a team of 50 high performing teachers to provide continuity of instruction. Every day for 2 weeks Uplift ran lessons on YouTube, which had on average 20-22K views daily. The IT Department distributed over 5K Chromebooks to families that did not have access to a computer and we have not seen an overreach from families in need of hotspot connections. If internet is needed, Uplift has provided in its website information on Spectrum 	

and Comcast free offerings. Supporting special population scholars was one of the most difficult questions and Alex Berk and Annette Enright both sit on Commissioner Morath's Special Education task force.

3. Transition to a more formal program. This is specific by division.
 - a. PS: utilize a "technology + Paper Approach." Here, Uplift mailed to each scholar's home a network-produced math, reading, writing, and science packet for PreK-5th grades, which align to daily You Tube videos. In addition, teachers check in with scholars 1-2x/week to give feedback and reinforce teaching points from videos and paper-based assignments.
 - b. MS: Scholars watch daily You Tube videos and then individual teachers give daily assignments aligned to network videos using Google Classroom. Teachers also host open office hours and small group sessions.
 - c. HS: Scholars participate in their normal course schedule with lessons led by their teachers using Google Classroom.
4. Whole Scholar Support: Y. Bhatia discussed the following:
 - a. Regarding child nutrition, the CNP Department started serving breakfast and lunch on March 16, the first day of the closure period. This process has utilized 5 Uplift school sites to meet the needs of our geographic areas. On average, Uplift is serving 2,400 – 2,600 meals/day. This highest service day was on March 26 and saw 2,800+ meals served. Uplift now has the authority from the TDA and the Department of Agriculture to distribute multiple meals at one time, so parents can now get food without needing his or her scholar in the car.
 - b. Regarding health services and social counseling, parents have been provided access to schedule calls with school nurses and social counselors, and our social counselors have been pro-actively connecting with families as well. Health Services is tracking and supporting any scholar or staff who is tested for COVID-19 or who comes back positive, but it is important to note we have had no reports of positive cases at this time. Y. Bhatia noted the Uplift website has a COVID section to provide links to relevant community resources as well.

- c. Regarding SEL, Uplift has created an outline for mini-lessons addressing a variety of SEL topics by PS, MS, and HS. Additionally, Uplift has created weekly 30-minute virtual advisories so scholars have an ability to connect with their peers in a facilitated discussion to help them be successful during the current environment. We have also created teacher training videos on how to incorporate 2-3 easy SEL items into virtual lessons.
5. People/Organizational Culture. All leaders across Uplift are being very intentional about checking in on their staff and there are regular communication touchpoints generally. All campuses are continuing to have regular team meetings, Y. Bhatia conducts a 2x/week update and Q&A call with all leaders, Y. Bhatia sends out a daily update email to all leaders, and regular all-staff emails are regularly being sent. All senior leaders are being intentional on modeling positivity, extending grace and flexibility, encouraging creativity, and we are very mindful that how we respond now impacts culture. Y. Bhatia gave a shout-out to A. Erickson and her team for their work.
6. Lessons Learned. Y. Bhatia reviewed the following lessons learned:
- a. Likely a difficult time for staff who need time to “process” items.
 - a. We need regular communication with school leaders so they feel informed and confident in their of execution duties.
 - b. We are still figuring out the right cadence of parent communications and we need to make things as simple as possible for our families when supporting their scholars in a remote learning environment.
 - c. There is external “noise” that is having an impact on our staff, such as news and online outlets, and it is important we proactively address this noise.
 - d. Our network is grounded in high expectations and pushing for really high quality outputs and outcomes. It has been hard helping the team understand that during this time we don’t need “perfection.”

The Board discussed multiple areas, including:

1. TEA support.
2. Regarding meal support, considerations for non-Uplift families that are in need.
3. What it will take to re-open schools.

	4. Staff pay	
III. Consider and take action on resolution addressing response to COVID-19	<p>Alex Berk introduced a resolution be approved by the Board that authorizes several important details:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves the closure of schools and facilities, effective March 16, 2020. 2. Identifies a public purpose, and approves, continued pay for employees, premium pay for non-exempt staff working on-site during the closure, and continued pay for long-term substitutes. 3. Delegates to the CEO or Superintendent the authority to make decisions moving forward without Board approval for staff pay, premium pay for non-exempt staff working on-site during the closure, continued pay for long-term substitutes, to make changes to the academic calendar, to address employee leave issues, to seek necessary waivers from the TEA or other agency, to declare a catastrophe, to act in place of the Board for procurement, and to re-open schools and facilities. 	On motion by J. Terry, and seconded by R. Frapart, the Board unanimously voted to approve the resolution, as presented.
IV. Closed Session	<p>At 9:02 a.m., R. Moss announced the Board was moving to closed session Pursuant to 551.072 and 551.071.</p> <p>At 9:06 a.m. R. Moss announced the Board was returning to open session. No decision or action was taken by the Board during closed session.</p>	
IV. Adjournment	At 9:06 a.m. R. Moss announced the meeting adjourned there being no further business to come before the Board.	

Respectfully submitted, Alexander S. Berk, Secretary.