

## Uplift Education Special Board Meeting Minutes

Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 at 8 a.m.

A virtual meeting of the Board of Uplift Education was held on the date and time listed above. 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 was held by videoconference.

Access online was through TEAMS and the agenda provided the following access information:

1. [https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_NzVIODZmZWUtODg4Ni00ZDU2LTgzODMtOTRiYWE5YzMxNmFj%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22c1136be9-3a18-45ff-8099-b182bfd6890c%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2226d7a1b6-9be1-4fdc-9c72-d7278ededda4%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NzVIODZmZWUtODg4Ni00ZDU2LTgzODMtOTRiYWE5YzMxNmFj%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22c1136be9-3a18-45ff-8099-b182bfd6890c%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2226d7a1b6-9be1-4fdc-9c72-d7278ededda4%22%7d)
2. For access by phone: +1 469-340-0751; conference ID: 699-925-258#

Called to Order: 8:01 a.m.

Adjourned: 9:44 a.m.

Board Members Present:

1. Cullum Clark
2. Dawn Davidson
3. Cathy Estrada
4. Richard Frapart
5. Ardo Fuentes
6. Andrea McEwing
7. John McPherson
8. Lael Melville
9. Michael Stack
10. James Stanton
11. Ed Tauriac

<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 8:01 a.m. by the chair, R. Frapart. R. Frapart welcomed the board to the meeting and took attendance and stated a quorum of the board was present.	
II. Hear and consider the level three grievance appeal of Ansel Jeffries	<p>The first order of business was for the board to hear and consider the level three employee grievance appeal of Ansel Jeffries.</p> <p>R. Frapart stated that Sections 551.074 and 551.082 of the Texas Government Code authorize the board to hear the appeal in closed session unless the employee requests for the hearing to be heard in open session. At that time R. Frapart asked Mr. Jeffries if he would like the hearing to be heard in open or closed session. Mr. Jeffries legal counsel, Julie Leahy, stated closed session.</p> <p>At 8:10am R. Frapart excused any public attendees and retired the board to closed session.</p>	

At 9:21 a.m. the board returned from closed session. R. Frapart noted that no decision or action was made by the board during closed session. A certified agenda was maintained of the closed session in compliance with the Texas Open Meeting Act.

R. Frapart asked if there was a motion from a board member on the grievance hearing.

On motion by J. Stanton to uphold the level two hearing officer decision and deny the level three grievance appeal of Ansel Jeffries, and seconded by C. Estrada, the board unanimously approved to uphold the level two hearing officer decision and deny the level three grievance appeal of Ansel Jeffries.

VII. Discuss and take action on return to in-person instruction timeline

Y. Bhatia, CEO, provided a review of Uplift’s strategic plan to return to in-person instruction. Y. Bhatia discussed the following:

1. Recent guidance from Dallas and Tarrant Counties.
  - a. Dallas County is strongly recommending all schools remain in “virtual only” mode
    - i. No time frame
    - ii. No metrics yet for when to convert to offering multiple options
  - b. Tarrant County is maintaining their original guidance on recommending “virtual only” through September 28<sup>th</sup>
  - c. Reminder- County can only make “recommendations” per the AG’s perspective; they are not “orders.” Only the Governor can create executive orders or close schools
  - d. Challenge is lack of coordination between Dallas County, Tarrant County, and TEA and the implications that result including additional complexity and uncertainty
2. Complexities Uplift will have to navigate:
  - a. Public school districts are allowed 8 total weeks of “transition” time for return to school which can be fully allocated to “virtual only” instruction
    - i. Uplift started the school year on August 10<sup>th</sup> virtual only and originally planned to do so through the first 4 weeks
    - ii. Public school boards, like Uplift’s, can approve a waiver to TEA to continue in virtual only for weeks 5-8 which for Uplift will go through October 2<sup>nd</sup>
    - iii. Post the first 8 weeks of school, public schools must offer in-person instruction to families who choose it. This would be starting October 5<sup>th</sup> at Uplift
  - b. TEA requires parents receive at least 2 weeks notice before return to in-person instruction and that parents have the opportunity to change their choice for

which learning option they prefer for their child. If Uplift schools begin offering in-person instruction on October 5<sup>th</sup>, we would have to notify parents on September 21<sup>st</sup>

- c. This would mean we would mean that during the latter part of the week of September 14 we would need to have high confidence we are on a track to offer an in-person learning option for families. Given Dallas County's approach to date, it is unclear if we will have further clarity on their stance. We can use our Uplift board retreat on September 18<sup>th</sup> to have discussion on how to proceed.
  - d. The result is we could be in a position where we have to decide if we continue to follow Dallas County's guidance and risk consequences with TEA or decide to proceed in offering Uplift families our 3 learning options- in-person, all virtual, and hybrid.
3. Current plans of other schools:
- a. Fort Worth ISD pushed their first day of school until September 8<sup>th</sup> and their board approved virtual learning only for the first 4 weeks of school; their in-person start could be as early as October 5<sup>th</sup>
  - b. Dallas ISD pushed their first day of school until September 8<sup>th</sup> and also shared it would do virtual learning for at least the first 4 weeks of school. Teachers will report back to schools to teach from their classrooms the week of September 14<sup>th</sup>
  - c. Arlington ISD started back to school this past Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup> and is also virtual only. They have not shared for how long but likely at least the first 4 weeks.
  - d. IDEA Tarrant County returned to school on August 3<sup>rd</sup> in virtual only.
  - e. Grand Prairie ISD started back to school this past Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup> and is also virtual only. They originally planned to stay virtual until September 8<sup>th</sup> (the original Dallas County recommendation)
4. Administration's recommendation to the Uplift board:
- a. Follow the guidance of both Dallas County and Tarrant County Public Health Offices while taking advantage of full 8 weeks of virtual only instruction allowed for by TEA
  - b. Extend virtual learning at all Uplift schools through Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>

	<p>c. Allow flexibility to bring back Prek/K, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade scholars and all staff the week of September 28<sup>th</sup> (assuming October 5<sup>th</sup> begins in-person option) to allow schools to slowly phase in scholars versus all “in-person” scholars returning at once.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provide extra attention to these entry level scholars for each division and which also has the highest % of new to Uplift scholars</li> <li>ii. Pressure test and refine systems (e.g., safety, master schedules, etc) with limited number of scholars in the building</li> </ul> <p>The board discussed support of specific grades and Y. Bhatia provided an overview of supports, including the free childcare program for families in partnership with donors. The board also discussed the impact of the County orders and any exposure, which will be revisited.</p> <p>R. Frapart asked if there was a motion from the board on the return to in-person instruction timeline plan.</p>	<p>On motion by C. Clark to approve the return to in-person instruction timeline plan, as presented, and seconded by A. McEwing, the board unanimously approved the motion.</p>
<p>VI. Community Forum</p>	<p>No persons signed up to speak during the community forum.</p>	
<p>VII. Adjournment</p>	<p>There being no further business before the Board, R. Frapart adjourned the meeting at 9:44 a.m.</p>	

Respectfully submitted, Alexander S. Berk, Secretary.