

Uplift Education Board Meeting Minutes – Annual Retreat

Friday, September 18, 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:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YTE0NGJINjMtYmUyYy00NjBhLTliNmMtOTliMTE0NmEzMWRh%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

For access by phone, please dial: +1 469-340-0751

If you are asked for a conference ID, please enter: 493 702 492#

Called to Order: 8:01 a.m.

Adjourned: 11:41 a.m.

Board Members Present (* denotes Executive Team member):

1. *John Beckert
2. *Cullum Clark
3. *Dawn Davidson
4. *Cathy Estrada
5. *Richard Frapart
6. *Ardo Fuentes
7. *Andre McEwing
8. *John McPherson
9. *Lael Melville
10. *Ryan Moss
11. *Michael Stack
12. *James Stanton
13. *Ed Tauriac
14. Christina Barbosa
15. Ossa Fisher
16. Cathleen Crews
17. Pilar Davis
18. Carey Carter
19. Adam Cox
20. George Conant
21. Andy Scripps
22. Ricky Garcia
23. Tony Dana

<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, staff, and guests to the meeting and then took attendance of the Executive Committee and stated a quorum of the Board was present. Y. Bhatia reviewed the agenda for the retreat. The board	

	<p>then answered the question who their favorite teacher was in school.</p>	
<p>II. Consider and Take Action on Board Minutes</p>	<p>R. Frapart introduced the previous board minutes needing consideration by the board. These minutes included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. June 23, 2020 – Regular meeting of the board. 2. July 14, 2020 – Special meeting of the board. 3. July 31, 2020 – Emergency meeting of the board. 4. August 13, 2020 – Special Meeting of the board. 5. August 21, 2020 – Special Meeting of the board. <p><u>ACTION ITEM</u> – Consider and take action on minutes from previous board meetings.</p>	<p>Upon motion by L. Melville to approve the slate of board minutes as presented, and seconded by C. Estrada, the board unanimously voted to approve the slate of board minutes as presented, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. June 23, 2020 – Regular meeting of the board. 2. July 14, 2020 – Special meeting of the board. 3. July 31, 2020 – Emergency meeting of the board. 4. August 13, 2020 – Special Meeting of the board. 5. August 21, 2020 – Special Meeting of the board.
<p>III. Update on Return to School</p>	<p><u>Reminder on return to in-person instruction timeline.</u></p> <p>A. Lora provided a review of the high-level staggered return to school plan. This included a review of Pre-K and K return, Pre-K, 2nd, 6th, 9th, and 12th return, and all grades return.</p> <p><u>Update on current enrollment numbers.</u></p> <p>J. Jahnke provided a review of current network enrollment numbers. The target enrollment number was 22,304 and the budgeted enrollment number was 21,487. Our current enrollment number is 21,890.</p> <p>Uplift’s total enrollment to target is 98.1%; Uplift’s total enrollment to budget is 101.8%</p> <p>Enrollment reflections:</p> <p>Glows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adjusted sections in MS & HS are holding at high percentages to target. 2. High average retention of New (85%) & Returning scholars (94%) to FDOS 3. Overall retention up 9% YOY for New & Returning scholars combined 4. Matched FWOS Enrollment at 94.4% to SY18-19 FDOS with 4,000 more scholars <p>Continuing Efforts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuous efforts for: Ascend, Elevate, Gradus, Meridian, Pinnacle & Triumph 2. PreK enrollment challenges: prequalification time & commitment given COVID 3. Return to School 2nd Round Outreach to No Shows, Unengaged and Declines 	

Review of parent engagement over the first several weeks of school – Aurora Lora, Chief of Schools.

Review of parent, scholar, and staff Panorama survey.

Aurora Lora reviewed the parent survey learning choice response by division and overall. Overall, 12% of families elected hybrid instruction, 34% elected in-person instruction, and 54% elected remote instruction.

To engage parents, Uplift built a robust back to school page on its website and launched a 6-week educational series, which included: How Do I Prepare for Remote Learning?, What Will Learning Look Like?, Who Are My Scholars Teachers and How Can They Learn About My Child?, How is My Scholar Adjusting and What Can I Do to Support?, How Will Uplift Keep My Scholar Safe?, and How Do I Support My Scholar with Learning Each Day? In addition, to provide transparency on Uplift's safety efforts, Uplift launched its #safelyforward campaign.

Aurora Lora also reviewed headlines from teacher and parent surveys. To address feedback on the staff surveys, Uplift added additional training opportunities, shared more resources, found more planning time and purchased additional equipment. Next steps for parents include providing enrichment materials, sending additional guidance on technology, and reaching out to families who requested support.

J. Gasko provided an update on Panorama scholar survey results. The surveys spanned grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12, and compared responses from spring 2020 and fall 2020. J. Gasko provided reflections on the survey responses with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic and implications on the survey therein. J. Gasko also discussed the Raise Your Hand initiative, which saw 3,097 scholars virtually raise their hand in response to the question: "Would you like to talk privately with a teacher, counselor, or other adult from your school about how you are doing or for extra support?" Scholar concerns included such items as virtual school, family dynamics, financial hardships, and COVID-19.

J. Gasko also discussed culture awareness and action. The question “How often students learn about, discuss, and confront issues of race, ethnicity, and culture in school?” was posed to scholars and 33% responded favorably. The demographic responses to the question were broken down by the following:

Female Scholars: 36% Favorable.

Male Scholars: 31% Favorable.

Black Scholars: 37% Favorable.

Hispanic Scholars: 34% Favorable.

White Scholars: 33% Favorable.

Asian Scholars: 31% Favorable.

Two or More Races: 32% Favorable.

Wins and Lessons Learned. Y. Bhatia provided a review of wins and lessons learned.

1. Wins:

- a. 95%+ scholars engaged daily on Schoology by end of week one.
- b. Well-being survey allowed early identification of scholars in need.
- c. Intentional about engaging parents over first 6 weeks.
- d. Early preparations this summer paying off.
- e. Executing new retention strategies worked.

2. Areas of improvement:

- a. Underestimated the parent technology support required.
- b. Ordered some PPE too early.
- c. Support leaders with “challenging” messages sooner.
- d. Conduct campus safety-based training earlier.

Reminder of key 4 planks of strategic plan. Y. Bhatia provided a high-level review of the board’s new strategic plan and related four planks.

Deep dive on plank #1: Be an “A” District. Dr. Remy Washington discussed plank #1, and reviewed the following:

- 1. Uplift has a TEA B rating, surpassing all urban districts in DFW. This means that more Uplift scholars meet and master grade level expectations on the yearly standardized STAAR state assessment. The rating was rolled-over from the 18-19 school year by TEA in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

IV. Update on our Strategic Plan

2. What being an “A” district requires us to accomplish from an accountability standpoint.
3. Network academic logic model, which includes:
 - a. Inputs: IB-aligned academic model (core instruction, intervention, community, and leadership).
 - b. Process: Core practices + yearly initiatives.
 - c. Outputs: increased scholar critical thinking + independence.
 - d. Outcomes: Achievement + growth + college readiness + equity.
 - e. Big Goal: 70% of our Scholars graduate from college within 6 years + 90% of our scholars will earn an economically viable post-secondary credential and career pathway
4. Core instruction lever.
5. How to facilitate learning in all three instructional models, such as:
 - a. Network IB-Curriculum in all Models.
 - b. Course Structures for both Remote and In-Person Learning (Secondary).
 - c. Small Group Instruction.
 - d. Teachers Hold Weekly Office Hours.
 - e. Web-Based Personalized Learning Applications.
 - f. Prioritized Instructional Strategies Adapted for all Models.
6. College and Career Readiness, including preparation, exposure, and readiness.

HB3 Board Goal Requirements. Dr. Washington next reviewed the HB 3 goal requirements. Under HB 3, school boards are required to adopt plans in early childhood literacy and math, as well as college, career, and military readiness. All plans are required to include:

- at least one assigned district-level administrator or employee of the regional education service center for the district’s region to coordinate implementation and submit annual report to the board on the district’s progress;
- an annual review by the board at a public meeting;
- an annual report posted on district and campus websites; and
- specific, quantifiable, annual goals for five years at each campus.

Early childhood plans are required to include:

- annual goals for aggregate student growth on 3rd grade math and reading STAAR;

- annual targets for students in each group evaluated under closing the gaps domain.

College, career, and military readiness plans are required to include:

- annual goals for aggregate student growth on CCMR readiness indicators evaluated under the student achievement domain;
- annual targets for students in each group evaluated under closing the gaps domain.

Next, Dr. Washington reviewed Uplift’s HB 3 district goals for consideration by the board:

- Increase District Overall 3rd Grade Reading Meets to 50% and Reduce Gaps to 60% of Current Levels.
- Increase District Overall 3rd Grade Math Meets to 55% and Reduce Gaps to 60% of Current Levels.
- Increase TSI Criteria Meets to 70% and Reduce Gaps to 50% of Current Levels.

ACTION ITEM: Consider and take action on approving HB 3 equity-informed STAAR goals.

Deep dive on plank #2: College & Career. Dr. Washington next reviewed plank #1, and reviewed the following regarding the Road to College and Career (RTCC):

- The RTCC spectrum of support, including the following areas:
 - Career Exposure and Experience.
 - Career Office.
 - College Access.
 - Family Engagement.
 - Persistence Support.
 - Stop-Out Support.
- Work completed along the spectrum of support.
- Class of 2020 DP Exam Results: In the 19-20 SY, 81% of scholars taking the DP exam scored 4 or better.
- May 2020 DP Exam Headlines:
 - 24% of scholars earning an IB diploma was 24%.
 - 68% scored a 4+ on the Language A Exam (English).
 - 48% scored a 4+ on the Humanities Exam.
 - 75% scored a 4+ on the Language B Exam (Spanish).
- Class of 2020 Matriculation.
- Non-College Pathway (93 scholars in 19-20).
- Review of the class of 2021 with emphasis on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Upon motion by D. Davidson to approve the HB 3 equity-informed goals as presented, and seconded by E. Tauriac, the board unanimously voted to approve the HB 3 equity-informed goals.

	The board discussed the inclusion of HBCUs in Uplift’s RTCC work.	
BREAK	R. Frapart retired the board for break at 9:32 a.m. At 10:30 a.m. the board returned from break and entered open session.	
	<p>Y. Bhatia addressed questions from the board regarding parent choice of instructional model and Uplift’s relationships with 2-year college partners.</p> <p><u>Deep dive on plank #3: Serve more scholars.</u> Y. Bhatia reviewed the 5-part continuum built to address scholar recruitment and engagement: marketing, recruiting, family engagement, scholar engagement, and MS-HS retention. To address the new 5-part continuum, a new organizational structure was put in place, and Y. Bhatia reviewed the Operations structure. A. Lora and D. Bigham next reviewed the re-organizations in their respective departments and the work being completed and next steps therein, including new hires, a robust marketing campaign, virtual information sessions for parents, and identification of influencers.</p> <p><u>Deep dive on plank #4: Talent.</u> A. Erickson provided a review of plank #4, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The market for talent continues to tighten. • Retaining our current teacher workforce is more important than ever. • The top 3 things our teachers consider when deciding to work at Uplift include: school culture, supportive leadership, and compensation. • Competitive compensation provided, i.e. at Uplift a staff member can earn more faster through access to multiple opportunities to increase your take-home pay. • Teacher retention has increased from 64% in 12-13 to 79.1% in 19-20. • Teacher retention by campus and region. • Deep dive into the talent market in the Fort Worth region. • School leader data: retention, tenure, and demographics. • Scholar demographics <p>Aurora Lora provided a review of culture, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 culture keys. 	
V. Emerging Equity Plan	<p>Multiple staff members discussed Uplift’s emerging equity plan, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board commitments: 	

- Direct the Uplift leadership team to create a detailed plan on addressing racial equity within Uplift for our September board retreat.
- Analyze Uplift performance data through a racial equity lens on a quarterly basis starting at our annual board retreat.
- Add additional budgetary resources to help our Black scholars be successful and ensure consistent resource allocation.
- Re-evaluate our curriculum and implement innovative instructional practices that allow scholars to better understand their racial history and identity, include more current topics such as anti-racism into our K-12 humanities courses, and increase teacher training on culturally responsive teaching practices beginning in the 2020-21 school year.
- Analyze our student attrition data and create an action plan to retain our Black scholars at the same rate as other scholar groups in the network.
- Develop a 3-year plan to increase the diversity of our overall leadership team and teaching staff because we know students thrive in learning environments where they can identify with their teacher.
- Increase our teacher and leader training on restorative discipline practices and create the plan for a therapeutic alternative to expulsions to launch in the 2021-22 school year.
- Support Uplift leadership team's plans to spend time with our Black Student Associations during the first academic quarter and hear their experiences in our schools and what actions we can take to improve their experience.
- Support the investment in expanding the parent engagement team and parent associations at Uplift to ensure our parents have a voice now and ongoing.
- Engage our philanthropic community in candid conversations to help educate them and reveal areas where their generosity is needed most to achieve racial equity at Uplift.
- The Equity Plan itself and action steps.

- Leveraging our internal dashboard, which includes a lens on our equity work.
- Additional budgetary resources to Black scholars
- Uplift Hampton Track & Field.
 - 1,000 seat bleacher capacity
 - 2-2.6M estimated cost
 - ~2 years to complete
 - To be used by other Uplift schools in South Dallas.
 - Longtime ask by the Hampton community.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Discuss and approve Uplift Hampton track investment
- Reevaluate our curriculum and instructional practices with an emphasis on the Teaching and Learning Team and RTCC.
- Analyze student attrition data and create action plan to retain our Black scholars
- Board commitment to diversity:
 - Diversity, defined as a collective or group and can only exist in relationship to others. A candidate is not diverse – they’re a unique, individual unit. This is the *numbers work*.
 - Equity, defined as a process that begins by acknowledging the reality of an unequal starting place and continues to address and correct the imbalance. This is the *systems/process work*.
 - Inclusion, defined as within your diverse team of talent, all feel welcome and can grow, contribute and develop – regardless of their identity. This is the *culture work*.
- Three-year plan to increase the diversity of our leadership teams and teaching staff.
- Increase training on restorative discipline practices and create the plan for a therapeutic alternative to expulsions.
- Uplift leadership team’s plans to spend time with our Black Student Associations during Q1/Q2.
- Support expanding the parent engagement team and parent associations at Uplift.
- Engage our philanthropic community to reveal areas where their generosity is needed most to achieve racial equity.
- Uplift Support of Racial Affinity Groups
- Uplift Peak name change:
 - Peak originally named to honor the historic district and because ‘peak’ aligned with reaching new heights.

Upon motion by D. Davidson to approve the Uplift Hampton track investment as presented, and seconded by A. Fuentes, the board unanimously voted to approve the Uplift Hampton track investment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We've learned that Junius Peak, for whom the district was named, has ties to the Confederate Army & Dallas KKK. ○ Uplift Peak community has responded positively to making this change. ○ <u>ACTION ITEM</u>: Consider and take action on launching name change process for Uplift Peak. 	<p>Upon motion by A. McEwing to approve launching the name change process for Uplift Peak as presented, and seconded by D. Davidson, the board unanimously voted to approve the launching of the name change process for Uplift Peak.</p>
VI. Community Forum	No persons signed up to speak during the community forum.	
VII. Adjournment	There being no further business before the Board, R. Frapart adjourned the meeting at 11:41 a.m.	

Respectfully submitted, Alexander S. Berk, Secretary.