

Connections Public Charter School

Governing Board Minutes

December 14, 2020 draft

Via googlemeets 3:00 pm

Call to Order: Mr. Thatcher called the meeting to order at 3:20 pm.

Members Present: John Thatcher, Kirk Bailey, Libby Oshiyama, Jerri Potter, Cheryl Gravela, (Heather McDaniel, Recorder)

Members Absent: Shinji Salmoiraghi (arrived 3:30), Jonelle Fukushima (arrived 3:45)

Guests: Carol Gray, Pua Ka'ai, Pam Thatcher, Romeo Garcia, Sami Kapele

Approval of Agenda:

A motion was made by Mr. Bailey to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Potter and was approved with consensus.

Approval of Minutes for November 9, 2020 meeting: Members reviewed minutes from the November 9, 2020 meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Potter to accept the minutes from the November 9, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Oshiyama and was approved with consensus.

Public Input: Ms. Ka'ai reported that there would be some communication from the Commission today regarding the furlough decision. The scenario is unclear, but charters may determine their own processes as they see fit, within legal boundaries. Charters will be allowed to remain open and fund their own SpEd staff during furloughs.

Correspondence & Communication:

Old Business

- **Administrator Evaluation Process:** Mr. Salmoiraghi emailed questions to members (attached), and reported on communication with MCREL representatives. Training is available in January, at a cost. The questions were discussed and clarified. Mr. Bailey suggested that teacher input should be included, and data across the year should be considered rather than a snapshot. The topic will be revisited at the next meeting, with Mr. Thatcher absent.

New Business:

- **Approval of New Substitute Teachers:** one current part-time employee was added to the list, in addition to two other individuals who submitted SF5s.
A motion was made by Ms. Potter to add three names to the current sub list. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bailey and was approved with consensus.
- **Review and Revision of Governing Board Policies:** tabled

Commission School Lead Report: Ms. Ka'ai reported that there would be some communication from the Commission today regarding the furlough decision. It is unclear what the scenario is, but charters may determine their own processes as they see fit, within legal boundaries. Charters will be allowed to remain open and fund their own SpEd staff during furloughs.

Operations Report:

Operations Status:

Financial Officer's Report: Dr. Oshiyama reviewed the Operations Statements and found it to be appropriate. Funds have spent, and indicated a lot of learning opportunities. Resources are not being over spent. A significant expense is professional development. Ms. Gravela reported that the per pupil amount was corrected to reflect the actual allocation.

- **Approval of Financial Statements:** Members reviewed and discussed the Financial Statements. *A motion was made by Ms. Potter to accept the November 2020 Operations Statement. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fukushima and was approved with consensus.*

Title I/Student Achievement Report:

- **Status of Title I Plan SY 20-21:** Mr. Thatcher reported on the SY 20-21 plan. Reports are due Friday, December 18.
- **Student Achievement:** Ms. Kapele shared test data.

Administrator's Report:

- **Current enrollment:** 358
- **SY 20-21 Covid Emergency Plan Status Report:** We are continuing with our hybrid learning model, no changes.
- **Kaumana Property Report:** Mr. Thatcher reported that with changes in local government, we may be getting closer to forward movement. We believe the new mayor will allow progress. Mr. Thatcher will talk to mayor's assistant. Mr. Garcia reported on the Kaumana Planning Committee's site visit. Progress is apparent. The team working there have some recommendations for expenditures. Water catchment is coming soon. Student employees are participating regularly. We are working with First Hawaiian Bank regarding future funding. Mr. Thatcher and Ms. Gravela are working on a Farm To School grant for \$50,000, if we can commit matching funds. Mr. Thatcher request that the Board consider dedicating \$25,000 of the \$100,000 earmarked for Kaumana property development from next year's budget. We will to ask CBESS for \$25,000 in matching funds also. There will be a conference in San Diego next year. There may be \$100,000 available in grant \$ next year. Mr. Garcia requests considering partnering with Laupahoehoe CPCS in agriculture and woodworking projects next year. Hawaii Community College may also be involved.

A motion was made by Ms. Potter to commit \$25,000 of the funds earmarked for Kaumana property development to match funds in the Farm To School grant. The motion was seconded by Dr. Oshiyama and was approved with consensus.

- **Other Items:**
 - **Carol Gray suggests considering not recording failing grades for secondary students during this period with Covid related challenges. They would have the option to retake the course for a grade and credit.**
A motion was made by Ms. Potter to not record grades for secondary students' courses if they fail, and allow for retaking the course. The motion was seconded by Dr. Oshiyama. Discussion: Mr. Garcia shared his experience at his prior school of awarding on an A, B, C or no credit basis, and the success of the system. Ms. Potter clarified that the provision would apply only to GR 9-12. Mr. Salmoiraghi asked if the provision would apply to failing grades, or to Ds also. Ms. Gray suggested that students could also work with teachers to make up work for a grade change, with approval of the Principal. Mr. Salmoiraghi asked for a vote, and the motion was approved with consensus.

- Mr. Thatcher reported on the Governor’s plan to furlough State employees starting in January. He suggests that, in the absence of much guidance, the Board would benefit the school by making a plan. Employees discussed and suggested possible options at the All Staff meeting on Friday, December 11. Ms. Kapele put a google survey together this morning, and all employees were invited to share their preferences for secondary schedule options, and for furlough options. 72% indicated that they preferred to keep the secondary schedule as is, on a Monday-Thursday calendar instead of Tuesday-Friday. Regarding furloughs: Five calendar options were presented, or no furlough, or no preference. There was a three-way tie.**

Mr. Thatcher reported that although no one wants furloughs, we should consider options. It is likely that the furloughs will go beyond just this year, as many as four years.

Ms. Gravela reported that the cost to pay non-DOE 6 days and DOE 10 days would be about 87,000. 20,000 of that is additional, since payroll is already funded. We have reserves to cover this year. If it goes on for 2-4 more years, we won’t be able to fund it.

A motion was made by Ms. Potter to implement six furlough days for 10-month employees and ten furlough days for 12-month employees, for the rest of the school year. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fukushima.

Discussion:

Mr. Thatcher stated that, for him, it would be a conflict of interest to vote for no furlough.

Mr. Salmoiraghi stated that it would be a good time to be fiscally conservative, with an uncertain future.

Ms. Potter stated that we should protect any surplus funds for the future.

Mr. Bailey stated two things that may affect the furlough scenario going forward: the possibility of Federal stimulus funding for education, and how the Covid vaccine may change the pandemic landscape. We should implement furloughs now while the impact is small.

Ms. Potter stated support for Mr. Thatcher’s comments.

Mr. Salmoiraghi asked in what scenario would layoffs happen. Mr. Thatcher: if we are unable to make payroll. We would have to give employees 90 days notice, and go through the RIF (Reduction In Force) process based on tenure.

Ms. Potter asked if there are State budget cuts planned for next year. Mr. Thatcher stated that there will be a 10% cut for SpEd next year. We will know more next week.

Ms. Fukushima asked if we could consider a smaller furlough scenario that may not meet the 10% cut but would allow for retaining some instructional time.

Ms. Potter stated that postponing a decision would prolong the scenario for employees.

Ms. Gravela stated that the only additional cost in not imposing furloughs would be the \$20,000 to fund SpEd position

Mr. Thatcher suggested that non-employee Board members should vote.

Mr. Salmoiraghi recommended that we follow the DOE plan, meet again if new information becomes available, and called for a vote.

The vote is as follows: Ayes: Ms. Potter, Ms. Fukushima, Mr. Salmoiraghi. Ayes with reservations: Mr. Bailey, Dr. Oshiyama. Abstained: Mr. Thatcher, Ms. Gravela.

Mr. Thatcher stated that the administrative team will determine the calendar for furlough days. Mr. Salmoiraghi stated that the Board would meet again if needed. Ms. Potter requested that the staff be provided with accurate representation of the budget cut for now, when furloughs are announced. Ms. Ka’ai expressed her appreciation of the difficulty of the decision , and her appreciation for members’ efforts.

Next Meeting: January 11, 2021 at 3:00 pm.

Adjournment: 5:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Shinji Salmoiraghi
Connections Governing Board Chair