

Connections Public Charter School

Governing Board Minutes

October 16, 2024

Kress Building 3:18 pm

Call to Order: Mr. Garcia called the meeting to order at 3:18 pm.

Members Present: Romeo Garcia, Damon Murphy (Google Meets), Clint Kolyer, Nalu Tufui, Pam Thatcher (recorder), Joanna Highstein

Members Absent: Michael Fischer, Christina Wilbourn

Guests: Cheryl Gravela, Sam Kolyer, Romona Ridley

Public Comment: None

Approval of Agenda: Members reviewed the draft agenda for the October 16, 2024 meeting. *A motion was made by Ms. Highstein to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Clint Kolyer and was approved with consensus.*

Approval of Minutes for September 25, 2024 meeting: Members reviewed the minutes from meeting on September 25, 2024.

A motion was made by Ms. Tufui to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Murphy. Members discussed the minutes, and the motion was approved with consensus. Ms. Highstein abstained.

Approval of New Members: None. After consideration, JP Thoma, last month's guest, is not interested in joining the board. Members discussed other potential board members. Ms. Ridley spoke to former parent, Krista Vera Curz, who is interested. Ms. Gravela stated that she invited someone to next month's meeting who is also interested.

Election of Officers: None

Food Program Update: Romeo had a conversation with Shinji after attending a workshop with David Sanson where they learned about successful practices in South America. Our cafeteria is trying to expand their use of locally grown products.

Public Input: None.

Correspondence & Communication: Update from Romona regarding HSTA grievance: Our school worked well with 8 employees that did not get paid, offering loans to employees who missed a paycheck. However, HSTA is continuing the grievance, stating that they must continue with it so members can receive the \$400 compensation for the hardship. DOE is supposed to pay out this money. We are concerned that if DOE refuses to pay the \$400 compensation for charter school SPED employees on their payroll, we may be forced to pay it. Mr. Murphy and Ms. Gravela want a letter stating that we are not liable for these payments.

There are two other EAs (HGEA) affected by mistakes made in that same DOE office, but they received no compensation for their hardship.

Another possible grievance: teachers who finish the probationary period are supposed to receive a \$2500 bonus. Our DOE teachers are not receiving this bonus. Our SPED/Article VI teachers are paid by the DOE, but DOE considers them temporary employees even though they have been working in this capacity for years. The DOE has not allowed them to complete the probationary period in order to receive this bonus.

Hawaii State Ethics Commission: an anonymous complaint was received by the Ethics Commission regarding our contract with Mr. Thatcher. He has been contracted to develop and conduct administrative evaluations, to implement a K-12 computer science program as required by the state, and to develop evaluations for HGEA employees. We are in the process of gathering evidence to comply with the complaint. Mr. Murphy stated that we followed proper procedures and will forward our evidence as requested.

Commission School Lead Report: none

Old Business: none

New Business:

Approval of New Substitute Teachers: none

Review and Revision of Governing Board Policies: none

Infinite Campus grade level reconfiguration: we currently have two daily schedules on Infinite Campus, K-6 and 7-12. In order to fully implement Infinite Campus as a student information system, we must split grades 7-12 into two groups, 7-8 and 9-12. Only one bell schedule is allowed for each age-level grouping, and our middle school and high school have different recess and lunch schedules. Full implementation of Infinite Campus is also a pre-requisite to launching our school database. In the process of filing for this change, the Infinite Campus office asked our school to submit a letter from the Charter School Commission approving this change. Mr. Foehner from the Commission recommended that we bring this to the governing board first. Members discussed this change today, October 16, 2024, so the letter drafted by Mr. Garcia and Mr. Murphy along with today's agenda will be sent back to the Commission. This change must be made before the end of October 2024.

Operations Report:

Operations Status - Financial Officer's Report

Notable figures on the financial report for September 30, 2024:

Hazard money was paid to employees and former employees. We must pay out the money first and then get reimbursed by the state. They are working with us to figure out how to pay two former employees that passed away. Their hazard money will go to their beneficiaries.

The audit will be more expensive this year because of federal ESSER money. A Single Audit is required when receiving over \$750K.

We were refunded for bus repairs by DAGS.

Enrollment is at 367. The budget prediction was 360, so we have additional 3 per pupil allocations added to budget this year. This is the highest enrollment we have had in a while.

Approval of Financial Statements:

A motion was made by Ms. Highstein to approve the September 30, 2024 financial statements. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tufui and was approved with consensus.

Administrator's Report:

Current enrollment: 367

Title I Report: We have 95 SPED (25%) + 21 504s = 114 (31% special needs). Although we did not meet proficiency goals, we are doing well when compared to other high SPED schools in the state as shown by Strive HI comparative data. We will complete Academic Performance Framework Indicator 3 as recommended by the commission's framework team at their last site visit. By completing this optional task, we can gain 3 points even if we do not meet proficiency; meeting proficiency will allow an additional 3 for a total of 6 points.

Kaumana Property Report:

Lauren will be working at the property in Kaumana to assist with agriculture projects. Dr. Neil Scott has been working on a project to build geodesic domes with a group of students. Mr. White will develop curriculum for the project.

The generator went down at the property and will probably need to be replaced. It should be less than \$10K and won't need board approval.

We have an 11th-grade student who reached the 10-day suspension mark, which can result in exclusion from school. Rather than exclude the student from school, the decision was made to have the student work on an interdisciplinary project at the Kaumana property.

Public Meeting for Kaumana Property: Meeting went well, although a couple of guests were confrontational. This was a good opportunity to be in the same room with people of differing opinions. We will schedule an open house on the property to further develop relationships.

Other Items: Mr. Murphy and 11th-grade student SunRa are in Minnesota at the RemixEd Conference. We will be partnering with founders of High School for Recording Arts and 4 Learning to set up a professional music studio at our school. This recording studio will create revenue, provide our students with recording opportunities, and will introduce them to career opportunities.

Mr. Garcia adjourned the meeting at 4:12 pm.

Next Meeting: November 20, 2024 at 3:15 pm.

Adjournment: 4:12 pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Mr. Romeo Garcia

Connections Governing Board Chair