

Connections Public Charter School

Governing Board Minutes

November 20, 2024

Kress Building 3:15 pm

Call to Order: Mr. Garcia called the meeting to order at 3:26 pm.

Members Present: Romeo Garcia, Damon Murphy, Nalu Tufui, Pam Thatcher, Christina Wilbourn (Google Meets), Joanna Highstein

Members Absent: Michael Fischer, Clint Kolyer

Guests: Cheryl Gravela, Heather McDaniel, Cade Loftin, John Woolverton, Xiomara Mejia (recorder)

Public Comment: None

Approval of Agenda: Members reviewed the draft agenda for the November 20, 2024 meeting. *A motion was made by Mr. Murphy to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tufui and was approved with consensus.*

Approval of Minutes for October 16, 2024 meeting: Members reviewed the minutes from meeting on October 16, 2024. *A motion was made by Ms. Tufui to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Thatcher and approved with consensus.*

Approval of New Members: Mr. Garcia informed members that Mrs. McDaniel, a former Connections employee, is interested in joining the board. She did inform the board that she does not plan to be seated long term but will stay on until another member is found and seated. *A motion was made by Mr. Murphy to seat Mrs. McDaniel as a board member. Members discussed. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Wilbourn and was approved with consensus.*

Elections of Officers: None

Food Program Update: Mr. Murphy gave members updated information about an open house, permitting, processing area, and student workers. *Mr. Murphy informed members that there will be an open house at the Kaumana property in January. The goal for this open house is to give members of the community an opportunity to see what is happening on the property. Mr. Murphy will be coordinating with Kaumana staff to plan this event. He also reminded members that we are reworking to use 15 acres and currently working with Land Planning on permitting. Mr. Murphy also reported that the Kaumana workers are working on where the processing area will be placed. They have ordered seeds to get things planted and into the kitchen for lunches in about 3-4 months. He also stated that 6-8 kids will be working at the property next semester on Fridays. Members discussed. (Mrs. Wilbourn was feeling unwell, so she excused herself from the remainder of the meeting.)*

Correspondence & Communication:

HSTA Grievance update: Mr. Murphy updated Mrs. McDaniel of the 3 grievances: 15 minute start time, DOE payroll issue, and DOE tenure pay. Members discussed.

Hawaii State Ethics Commission: Mr. Murphy reported that he sent in his final response to the Ethics representative regarding anonymous complaint against Mr. Thatcher's contract, which is offering computer science K-12m as well as helping create evaluations for Administrators and support personnel. Members discussed.

Commission School Lead Report: None

Old Business: None

New Business:

Approval of New Substitute Teachers: none

Review and Revision of Governing Board Policies: none

Operations Report:

Operations Status - Financial Officer's Report

Members reviewed the financial statements for October 2024. Ms. Gravela discussed the report with members. Only thing to note was that we received more per pupil allocations. Ms. Gravela updated the budget, so it is now corrected. She also added \$100,000 into the salary budget to hire some more full-time classroom help.

Ms. Gravela informed members that Connections has received a new grant, TANF. Planning to use the grant to pay for sports which will be moved under Studio Shaka. This will allow them to pay coaches through TANF and grow Studio Shaka. Additional plans for grants use are hiring tutors for after school, as well as a counselor that could transition from normal school hours into Studio Shaka. Mr. Murphy and Ms. Gravela are waiting to get more information on this grant. Members discussed.

Ms. Gravela is recommending the purchase of a new flat nose bus. The current bus was purchased for approximately \$127,000 plus interest and has now had approximately \$131,000 put towards fixing it. She has reached out to the contact of school bus providers and is waiting for a response. Members discussed.

Approval of Financial Statements:

A motion was made by Mrs. McDaniel to approve the October 2024 financial statements. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Highstein and was approved with consensus.

Administrator's Report:

Current enrollment: 365

Title I Report/Student Achievement Report: Mrs. Thatcher shared data with members regarding testing and the Annual Commission report.

Mrs. Thatcher stated that many other schools have higher gaps than our students. She suggests that when the Commission comes for the charter renewal, that these reports are used to compare the other

schools which will show that our students have made a lot of growth. Mrs. Thatcher will meet with ELA and HS Math teachers to implement spending time each week practicing/learning test taking skills. Members discussed.

Other Items:

Mr. Murphy brought an updated Title IX policy.

Mr. Murphy gave members a quick overview on the changes the policy implements to work towards more equality. The school will have to provide sanitary items for all genders and make these items accessible through different areas and/or classrooms. He will give all members the updated policy via email to review, for approval at another meeting.

Mr. Murphy let members know that he is currently looking to hire a counselor.

Mr. Murphy wants to find a certified counselor to work with our students. One of the things he needs to figure out as he does that is where the counselor will be placed, in order to comply with student privacy. Some possibilities are building out a space on theater side or to switch out the elementary resource room and put counselor there. Members discussed.

Mr. Garcia requested update on sports.

Mr. Woolverton informed members of some of the sports that are currently or will be available at Connections this school year. Some of the sports mentioned were cheerleading, volleyball 6-12, girls flag football, judo and swimming. Mr. Woolverton stated that each sport is doing well, and he is still hopeful for more growth and involvement from students. His goal for next year is to create a basketball team.

Mr. Murphy informed members he is wanting to work with OK farms.

He is setting up a meeting with them to gather more information regarding the student internships that they offer.

Mr. Murphy informed members that because of the production coming from the farm, there will be excess food. He is wanting to open on Sunday's and sell some of the extra food to the community. This will also give them a chance to see what the school is able to produce and accomplish.

Mr. Murphy let members know that he met with some of his contacts from the radio station. He stated that they thought everything looked good. Next step is to begin to work on curriculum.

Mr. Murphy updated members regarding the music studio through CBESS. The music studio will be in the dungeon and will use High School of Recording Arts curriculum. Members discussed.

Mr. Garcia adjourned the meeting at 4:28pm.

Next Meeting: December 18, 2024 at 3:15 pm.

Adjournment: 4:28 pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Mr. Romeo Garcia

Connections Governing Board Chair