

**Connections Public Charter School**

**Governing Board Minutes**

**March 12, 2025**

**Kress Building 3:15 pm**

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

**Members Present:** Romeo Garcia, Damon Murphy, Nalu Tufui, Pam Thatcher, Christina Wilbourn, Heather McDaniel, Joanna Highstein, Clint Kolyer

**Members Absent:** Michael Fischer

**Guests:** Cade Loftin, John Woolverton, Nohea Elzia, Xiomara Mejia (as recorder)

**Public Comment:** none

**Approval of Agenda:** Members reviewed the agenda for the March 12, 2025 meeting.

*A motion was made by Ms. Tufui to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Thatcher and was approved with consensus.*

**Approval of Minutes for February 19, 2025 meeting:** Members reviewed the minutes from meeting on February 19, 2025.

*A motion was made by Mrs. McDaniel to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Wilbourn and approved with consensus. Mr. Kolyer and Mrs. Highstein abstained due to February absence.*

**Approval of New Members:** None

**Elections of Officers:** None

**Food Program Update:** Mr. Murphy reported that the kitchen staff are continuing to work with Kaumana property staff. They contributed about 80% of the food provided at the community meeting on February 28, 2025.

**Correspondence & Communication:** Mr. Murphy reported on another grievance regarding teacher lines not being posted in timeframe DOE sets. He states that Connections often does not receive the budget until after the new year begins, so there is no way to know what will be available. Mr. Murphy has met with the teachers to clarify this. Members discussed.

Mr. Murphy updated members regarding the grievance concerning the 15 minutes early start time. The grievance has now moved to arbitration. Mr. Murphy has consulted with DAG Smith and will continue to work with him. Mr. Woolverton stated that the change has drastically improved student activity in the mornings, and reminded members that a survey was conducted with parents, support staff, and teachers. Members discussed.

**Commission School Lead Report:** None

**Old Business:** Charter School Accreditation

Mr. Murphy recapped information from last meeting about exploring accreditation with WASC.

Accreditation, for grades 9-12, would give the school the ability to work with private grants, and benefit the students with credit transfer, sports, and scholarships. The beginning cost is \$161 – this will allow us to see the criteria required. Mr. Murphy would like to see how much help the staff is willing to give as there is also rechartering, Title I, Title IV, and TANF to think about and work on.

A motion was made by Mrs. Highstein to initiate the process of working toward accreditation through WASC and seconded by Ms. Tufui. Members discussed. The motion was approved with consensus.

#### New Business:

Approval of New Substitute Teachers: none

#### Operations Report:

Operations Status - Financial Officer's Report: tabled

#### Administrator's Report:

Current enrollment: 353

Title I Report: Mrs. Thatcher reported that the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) is due next Friday and the academic CAP is due in April.

Student Achievement Report: Mr. Murphy reported that they are still working on the database. They are trying to get permission for the contractor to download information from IC and need to come up with a data share agreement.

Kaumana Property Report: Mr. Murphy informed members that he is trying to get the application submitting for 15-acre permit. He is working with AG to see how to continue to move this forward. He also stated that the second part of process was to have 2 community outreaches. The first one was held in October 2024, which was successful. The second one held this year on February 28, 2025, received a lot of positive feedback and he believes it was even more successful than the first. They will be submitting the application soon and Mr. Murphy will check with John Pipan tomorrow for an update. Members discussed.

#### Other Items:

Mr. Murphy would like to have an upcoming meeting at the property so members can see what is taking place there.

There was an accident in second grade involving lockers falling, which resulted in a student being hurt. Since the event, the lockers were removed, and all others have been double checked and secured. Mr. Murphy informed members that there was an email from parent requesting student go on distance learning. Members discussed.

Mr. Murphy reported that he is still working on getting clarification regarding the student and their service dog, he has reached out to the DAG. Hawaii does not require a certificate to be shown, so the DAG's recommendation was to make sure the student has a doctor's note stating their disability requires a service dog. Mr. Murphy is working on getting the note from the student and will continue to work with DAG to make sure the correct steps are taken. Members discussed.

**Mr. Murphy was again asking the DAG for guidance regarding ICE. Some teachers have shown concern and want clarity as to what the school is required to do. DAG has stated that as of now, there will only be a need to comply if there is a federal or state court warrant, signed by a federal or state court judge. Members discussed.**

**Mr. Garcia adjourned the meeting at 4:43pm.**

**Next Meeting: April 16, 2025 at 3:15 pm.**

**Adjournment: 4:43pm**

**Respectfully submitted by:**

**Mr. Romeo Garcia**

***Connections Governing Board Chair***