



**APPROVED 10/25/2018**

**Georgia Connections Academy (GACA)  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Thursday, September 20, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. ET**

**Held at the following location:  
Georgia Connections Academy  
2763 Meadow Church Road, Suite 208  
Duluth, GA 30097**

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**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. when all participants were present. The school location was open for the public to attend.

**II. Roll Call**

Board Members Present at Roll Call: Rich Thompson, Steve Julal and Tiarra Felix (via phone);

Board Members Absent: JoAnn Brown and Susanne Watts;

Guests Present: Heather Robinson, School Leader (in person); Brazilla Page, School staff; Karen Duquette, Brian Rosta, Tanya Lee, Shawn Soltz, Laura Coleman and Megann Arthur, Pearson Online & Blended Learning (POBL) staff (via phone).

**III. Mission Statement**

Mr. Thompson read the school's Mission Statement to begin the meeting.

**IV. Public Comment**

There were no comments at this time.

**V. Routine Business**

a. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Thompson asked the Board to review the Agenda distributed prior to the meeting. The Board requested to table the EMO Evaluation Update. There being no further changes noted, a motion was made by Mr. Julal and seconded by Mr. Thompson as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Agenda for the September 20, 2018 Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Georgia Connections Academy, as amended, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

[Mr. Soltz joined at 5:05 p.m.]

## VI. Oral Reports

### a. School Leader's Report

#### i. Data Dashboard/ Strategic Plan Update

Ms. Robinson reviewed the school data dashboard information as included in the Board materials with the Board, highlighting the progress made on the school's strategic goals. She provided the Board with an update on enrollment and enrollment trends, benchmark assessment and improvement plan progress.

[Ms. Lee joined at 5:13 p.m.]

#### ii. Graduation Cohort Rate Update

Ms. Robinson provided the Board with an update on the graduation rates and ongoing efforts to improve the graduation rate.

#### iii. Semi-Annual SCSC Site Visit

Ms. Robinson provided the Board with an update on the upcoming State Charter Schools Commission (SCSC) monitoring site visit, as well as other state reporting requirements.

### b. Financial Report

Ms. Lee reviewed with the Board the formatting changes to the school's financials in an effort by POBL staff to provide the Board with a more concise overview to support fiscal responsibility. The Board expressed their pleasure with the new financial report format and requested supplemental financial reports. Ms. Lee further reviewed the revenue and expense statements included in the Board materials. She reviewed the changes in financials and the forecast since last month's statements, including pension expenses.

#### i. Audit Progress and Filing Deadline Update

Ms. Lee reviewed the audit process for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018 completed to date. She further advised that the audit report is due prior to the Board's next meeting. The Board discussed the various options to ensure the audit report is filed with the authorizer by the due date, and agreed to appoint the Board Treasurer as Board Designee to finalize and submit the audit report. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Felix and seconded by Mr. Thompson as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Board Treasurer as Board Designee to finalize and submit the 2017-2018 school year Financial Audit Report, as discussed, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

## VII. Board Strategic Development

### a. College and Career Academy (CCA) Proposal Update

Ms. Robinson reviewed with the Board the College and Career Academy (CCA) Proposal research and recommendation as included in the Board meeting materials. Ms. Duquette reviewed the Pearson Online & Blended Learning (POBL) proposal to provide additional career and technology education (CTAE) as included in the Board meeting materials. The Board discussed the current offerings and the potential options in detail. The Board thanked Ms. Robinson and Ms. Duquette for their research and expressed a desire to explore additional POBL CTAE offerings.

b. EMO Evaluation Update

This item was tabled earlier in the Board meeting.

**VIII. Consent Items**

Mr. Thompson asked the Board members whether there were any items from the Consent Items that they wished to have moved to Action Items for discussion, or tabled. There being no changes noted, a motion was made by Mr. Julal and seconded by Ms. Felix as follows:

RESOLVED, the Consent Items:

- a. Approval of Minutes from the August 16, 2018 Board Meeting;
- b. Approval of Staffing Report;
- c. Approval of Connections Academy of Georgia, LLC Invoices for July and August;
- d. Approval of Revision(s) to the Employee Handbook: Student and Family Communications Policy; and
- e. Approval of Revision(s) to the 2018-2019 School Year State Specific School Handbook: Changing Attendance to Escalation; are hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

**IX. Action Items**

a. Approval of Closing Enrollment on September 20, 2018 for the 2018-2019 School Year

Ms. Robinson reviewed with the Board the advantages for closing enrollment on September 20, 2018 for the 2018-2019 school year, in order to effectively manage the school and focus on student academic achievement. She further advised that the deadline means that any students interested in enrolling for the 2018-2019 school year will have to complete all enrollment steps by midnight of the date listed. Ms. Duquette reviewed a recommendation from POBL to close enrollment for grades 10-12. The Board discussed each proposal in detail, including the focus on academic achievement, as well as the financial and staffing considerations associated with the timing of closing enrollment. There being no further discussion, Mr. Julal made the following motion and it was seconded by Ms. Felix as follows:

RESOLVED, that closing enrollment on September 20, 2018 for the 2018-2019 School Year for grades 9-12 and to hire substitute teachers to assist with the onboarding of new students, as discussed, is hereby approved.

The motion passed with two (2) affirmative votes by Mr. Julal and Ms. Felix; and one (1) negative vote by Mr. Thompson.

b. Approval of Board Training and Conference Attendance for the 2018-2019 School Year

Ms. Arthur reviewed the upcoming trainings and conferences that have been identified that may interest members of the Board. The Board reviewed the upcoming training offerings. Board members also discussed the advantages and specific agenda topics of each conference. The Board requested to table this item for consideration to the next Board meeting.

This item was tabled.

c. Approval of Board Designee for Annual School Handbook Review

Ms. Arthur reviewed the annual school handbook review process, and the advantages of having a designee from the Board to work with school leadership and POBL support staff on the document review process, prior to the final draft presentation to the Board. Board members had discussion on the best person to act in this capacity, and identified Board member, Susanne Watts to be the best to act as Board Designee for this purpose. There being no further discussion, Mr. Julal made the following motion and it was seconded by Ms. Felix as follows:

RESOLVED, that Susanne Watts as Board Designee for Annual School Handbook Review, as discussed, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

**X. Information Items**

a. State and Strategic Client Relations (SCCR) Update

Ms. Duquette provided the Board with an update on legislative activities which may impact the school.

b. School Leadership Team (PSLT) Update

Dr. Rosta presented to the Board on behalf of Pearson Online and Blended Learning's (POBL) School Leadership Team.

i. State of the School, School Improvement Planning and Focus Goals

Dr. Rosta provided the Board with a preview of items currently being finalized for presentation at the Board's next meeting, including a thorough review of progress on the previous school year's goals, the school improvement plan and staff efforts toward specific initiatives, both completed and ongoing. Mr. Rosta further advised that Ms. Robinson would be presenting the proposed school focus goals for the current school year for the Board's consideration, as well.

c. Overview of 2018-2019 Items for Board Consideration

Ms. Arthur reviewed the outline of items planned to be presented for Board consideration throughout the current school year. She further advised the Board that the document was fluid, and items may be included, omitted, or considered on a varied timeline based on a number of factors, including state submission and enrollment deadlines, as well as school need for student support.

**XI. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date – Thursday, October 18, 2018**

Mr. Thompson noted that the Board was at the end of its agenda. The Board discussed moving their next meeting and requested a Board poll of availability. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m. The next meeting is to be held TBD.