



**APPROVED 06/20/2019**

**Georgia Connections Academy (GACA)  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Wednesday, May 29, 2019 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 meeting location was open for the public to attend.

**II. Roll Call**

Board Members Present at Roll Call: Rich Thompson, JoAnn Brown, Steve Julal and Tierra Felix (all in person);

Board Members Joined During Meeting: Susanne Watts (in person);

Guests Present: Heather Robinson, School Leader (in person); Brazilla Page and Kari Kennedy, School staff; Karen Duquette, Melissa Nelson, Megan Holston, Laura Coleman and Megann Arthur, Pearson Online & Blended Learning (POBL) staff (via phone).

**III. Mission Statement**

Ms. Felix read the school's Mission Statement to begin the meeting.

**IV. Public Hearing on the 2019-2020 Proposed Annual Budget**

Mr. Julal announced the commencement of the budget public hearing on the proposed 2019-2020 Annual Budget. He noted the public hearing had been published as required by Georgia Law. He asked if there were any members of the public wishing to address the proposed 2019-2020 school year budget. Hearing none, Mr. Julal referred the Board to the proposed Budget materials provided in the Board materials. He reviewed the budget development process to date that included the himself as Board Treasurer, School Leader, POBL staff. He further advised that the final Budget will be presented to the Board for their consideration at their next Board meeting. The Board also acknowledged the new budget adoption requirements, including this in-person meeting and the next month's telephonic meeting with budget review prior to adoption. There being no questions and no members of the public in attendance, the Board closed the public hearing and resumed the regular session of the meeting.

**V. Public Comment**

There were no comments at this time.

## **VI. Audit Committee, Committee of the Entire Board**

### **a. Approval of Audit Firm Engagement for the 2018-2019 School Year Financial Audit**

Mr. Julal reviewed the audit firm engagement letter, as included in the Board materials. He advised the Board that the audit firm was the same the Board had engaged for the previous school year, and reviewed the anticipated audit-related charges and scope of services. There being no further discussion, Mr. Julal made the following motion and it was seconded by Dr. Brown as follows:

RESOLVED, that the engagement of Brooks, McGinnis & Company, LLC for the 2018-2019 school year financial audit, as presented, is hereby accepted.

The motion passed unanimously.

## **VII. Routine Business**

### **a. Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Thompson asked the Board to review the Agenda distributed prior to the meeting. The Board requested to move Consent Item (c) Approval of Connections Education, LLC Invoices for April and Consent Item (g) Approval of POBL Charge Allocation for State Reporting Purposes to Action Items. There being no further changes noted, a motion was made by Dr. Brown and seconded by Ms. Felix as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Agenda for the May 29, 2019 Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Georgia Connections Academy, as amended, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

[Ms. Watts joined the meeting in person at 5:10 p.m.]

## **VIII. 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. She also shared with the Board the current status of items contained within their Strategic Plan, including graduation rate progress and recent approval of the school improvement grant plan and budget.

#### **ii. Graduation Plans and End of Year Activities**

Ms. Robinson reminded the Board that the high school graduation ceremony is planned for May 30, 2019, and encouraged Board members to attend. She also updated the Board on the progress toward hiring a new lead principal.

#### **iii. State Testing Update**

Ms. Robinson reviewed with the Board the recent state testing preparations by school staff members and participation rates.

iv. Compensation Update

Ms. Robinson reviewed with the Board teacher feedback that the staff compensation letters seemingly did not include the teacher pay increase widely publicized by the Governor. Ms. Holston reviewed the compensation formula for the proposed budget in detail. Mr. Thompson and Mr. Julal requested a meeting with Ms. Holston to discuss the compensation formula further, and indicated a possible need for the Board to hold a Special Board Budget meeting before the June Board meeting to finalize staff compensation for the 2019-2020 school year.

b. Financial Report

In Ms. Lee's absence, Ms. Holston reviewed the financial materials included in the Board materials in detail, highlighting the budget and forecasting areas of the financial statements. She reviewed the changes in the financials and forecasted expenses since the last meeting's statements, including the balance sheet and school's revenue and expense statements.

**IX. Board Strategic Development**

There was no update at this time.

**X. 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. The Board requested to return items (c) Approval of Connections Education, LLC Invoices for April and Consent Item (g) Approval of POBL Charge Allocation for State Reporting Purposes from Action Items back to Consent Items. There being no further changes noted, a motion was made by Dr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Julal as follows:

RESOLVED, the Consent Items:

- a. Approval of Minutes from the April 18, 2019 Board Meeting;
- b. Approval of Minutes from the May 9, 2019 Special Board Meeting;
- c. Approval of Connections Education, LLC Invoices for April;
- d. Approval of Revision(s) to the Employee Handbook;
- e. Approval of Board President as Board Designee to Approve Summer Staffing Decisions for the 2019-2020 School Year;
- f. Approval of Revision(s) to the 2019-2020 School Year State Specific School Handbook: Various Updates; and
- g. Approval of POBL Charge Allocation for State Reporting Purposes; are hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

**XI. Action Items**

a. Review and Approval of Staffing Report

Ms. Robinson provided the Board with an update on staffing levels and hiring efforts for the next school year. She further updated the Board on the recent Georgia Charter Schools Commission Board meeting and suggestions for improvement in finance reporting. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Dr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Julal as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Staffing Report, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

b. Review and Approval of Contract for Substitute Teaching Services

Ms. Robinson reviewed with the Board the proposed WiserEd Solutions, LLC contract for substitute teaching services, as included in the Board meeting materials. She reviewed the proposed scope of services and estimated charges. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Julal and seconded by Dr. Brown as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Substitute Teaching Services Contract, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

**XII. 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

In Ms. Solesby's absence, Ms. Nelson presented to the Board on behalf of Pearson Online & Blended Learning's (POBL) Partner School Leadership Team.

i. School Leader Review Process Update

Ms. Nelson outlined the annual school leader review process with the Board. She reminded the Board that Ms. Robinson's final review will be conducted by Dr. Brown in cooperation with OBL, and will be discussed during the June Annual Board Meeting. Ms. Nelson further reminded Board members that the process includes feedback from the Board through a survey and reiterated the importance of Board member participation in the review process.

c. Board Member Recruitment Update

Mr. Thompson provided the Board with an update on ongoing Board Member recruitment efforts. Ms. Robinson reminded the Board of the state's school leader evaluation requirements of two individuals (a Board member or someone hired by the Board) that are credentialed in Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES).

**XIII. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date – Thursday, June 20, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. ET at the School Location**

Mr. Thompson noted that the Board was at the end of its agenda. The Board acknowledged the recent passing of founding Board Member, Charlotte Collins, and held a moment of silence in her honor. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:46 p.m. The Board's Annual meeting is to be held on Thursday, June 20, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.