Kūlia Academy

School Board Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: May 12, 2025, 4:00 pm HST

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom and Kūlia Academy campus at 2340 Omilo Ln. Honolulu, HI 96819

Present:
Robert Bley-Vroman, Chair
Graham V. Crookes
Salim Ucan
Murat Arabaci
Safa Aktepe

Absent:
Lisa Letoto-Ohata
Benjamin Cabreros

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM by Chair Robert Bley-Vroman.

2. School Update

State Testing: The school is currently in the second week of state testing and expects to finish by Tuesday or Wednesday of the following week. Andy will provide an update on test scores at the next meeting.

Enrollment: Current enrollment remains at 85 students. The school has received 300 applications for the next year, with 185 indicating interest in attending and 135 submitting paperwork so far.

Re-enrollment: The re-enrollment rate is approximately 79%, with 67 out of 85 students returning.

Student Departure: 19 students left during the school year, primarily due to transportation problems and family situations.

Chronically Absent Student: One student has been chronically absent due to family issues, and the school is initiating a court case.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: Parent-teacher conferences were held, with 70 out of 85 families attending.

Student Research Expo: The school will hold a Student Research Expo on May 23rd from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., showcasing student projects in AI and data science.

Health Assistant and Nurse: The school now has a full-time health assistant and will have a registered nurse on staff two days a week.

3. Financial Update

Andy shared financial information including projected revenues, special education funding shortfalls, and cash flow concerns. Grants and expenditures were reviewed. Andy will follow up on unpaid bills, outstanding grants, and reimbursement processes.

Revenue: The school has collected 87% of its projected $1.68 million revenue budget and expects to reach over 95% by the end of the year.

Special Education Funding: Special education funding is lagging behind projections due to an unfilled EA position, and lower-than-average salaries for special education staff.

E-Rate Grant: The school received a 60% reimbursement instead of the expected 80% due to discrepancies in the reported free and reduced lunch ratio. The school is working with the commission to update this information in the DOE system.

Other Grants: The school is waiting on approximately $9,000-$10,000 in COFA funds for Micronesian students.

Approximately $5,000 in travel funds and $5,000-$10,000 in other funds from the charter school grant are being held until the school transitions to a reimbursement-based payment system.

The school's application for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant was rejected due to the inaccurate free and reduced lunch ratio.

The school is considering applying for a CSP expansion grant in August-September.

Expenditures: Total expenditures are at 81% of the budget, but this figure does not reflect unpaid bills.

Administration and Salaries: 84% of the administration and salaries budget has been spent.

Instructional Services: Spending on instructional services is at 79% of the budget due to salary payment delays and some lower-than-projected salaries.

Pupil Services: Expenses for pupil services are significantly lower than budgeted (58%), with food service expenses expected to be lower than initially projected.

Operations and Maintenance: Rent payments are up to date, and the school is saving approximately $12,000-$13,000 due to a change in insurance providers.

4. Budget Planning

Next Year Budget: Andy will prepare three draft budgets based on 150, 180, and 200 student enrollment projections for the upcoming school year.

Cash Flow: The school may face a cash flow issue in July due to the timing of payroll and the potential delay in receiving the first apportionment of funds from the Charter Commission. The board discussed possible measures to mitigate this risk.

5. Approval of Fund Re-Allocation

At Kūlia's board meeting on March 10, 2025, the board approved a budget transfer of $9,000 from the Other Teaching Services category to Recruitment/Advertising, contingent upon approval from Treasurer Murat. Following the meeting, Treasurer Murat granted his approval. Specifically, the transfer involved reallocating $8,500 from the Contracted Services line (accounting code 234) under Other Teaching Services (code 230) to the Recruitment/Advertising line (accounting code 182). Dr. Bley-Vroman informed the board of this reallocation, and the board formally ratified the change.

6. Other Business

Dr. Salim Ucan will coordinate with Andy to conduct his evaluation before the end of the school year. The board may plan a retreat. Andy's salary discussion is scheduled for the June budget meeting.

Decisions and Action Items

- Dr. Ucan to evaluate Andy before end of year; board to cover travel.

- Andy to provide detailed enrollment data and unpaid bills.

- Andy to apply for new grants and update lunch data in DOE systems.

- Salim to coordinate site visit for evaluation.

- Two June meetings to be scheduled for budget review.

Adjournment

Meeting was informally concluded at approximately 5:15 PM.