

February 25, 2019

Members of the Hawaii State Charter Commission,

I have to be off-island Thursday for your meeting in Kona, so am submitting this information to you in advance. I may have someone read a brief statement aloud at the meeting on my behalf.

I am President of the board of Friends of Kona Pacific Public Charter School (Friends), and as one of the co-founders of the school who helped write the charter, I have served on this non-profit board since the school's inception 10 years ago. In this capacity, I have donated more time, energy, and money than any other individual in the school's history. My hope is that this long-term level of involvement and perspective will help you to trust my assessment of the current situation with the school, but one thing that seems very clear is that it will likely be difficult for you – Commissioners and Commission staff – to truly know whom to trust regarding what's actually going on with the school, especially in a public meeting that caters to the dissatisfied and self-interested.

You will hear from the Governing Board in response to several of your agenda items pertaining to Friends, but I am available to answer any of your questions if you wish to contact me for information. I thought it might be helpful here to shed some light on the relationship between Friends and the school. The finances of Friends are managed by a school-contracted employee (with board oversight), while all inter-entity financial transactions and the lease are negotiated, discussed, and agreed upon jointly by both boards prior to their implementation. Friends exists to support the school, and while there have been staff in the past who did not properly tend to both sets of books, it's being cleaned up nicely by new staff this school year and many protocols have been put into place to facilitate better functioning and accountability.

If for any reason the Commission is under the impression that Friends is somehow a problem for the school, this is part of the divisiveness that some staff have unnecessarily perpetrated. Friends is a threat to no one, it has no power, it is essentially an arm of the school that, while legally independent, takes direction from the school regarding its priorities and aims to help the school save money that can be best spent on the educational program. The finances are intended to work in tandem, which is why the same person has managed both sets of books since the school's inception and the boards work together on all financial matters (and Friends board members don't have access to the accounting system or the checkbook). We have the same auditor. We share credit cards. Money moves between the organizations as needed, the legitimacy of which is affirmed by the Memorandum of Agreement both organizations and the Attorney General signed in 2017 regarding this highly positive dynamic.

The organizations have historically maintained a fruitful relationship, but in recent years we've witnessed discordant comments from staff, with suggestions that there's some sort of improper or adversarial relationship between the two entities, which isn't true at all. Any allegations that have been made about improprieties are entirely made up, as can easily be proven. Friends does what it's asked by the school – it bought the land, receives grants,

operates programs that benefit the school, maintains the land and campus, provides housing to school staff, and raised funds for and is building a kitchen to support the nutrition program that saves the school \$36k/year in rent. Friends intentionally assures a school lease rate that is about half what other local charter schools pay, even though it harms Friends' cashflow sometimes. Friends has no cash reserves by design, nor does it have staff beyond a part-time land maintenance person.

At the meeting on Thursday you may hear from people who are severely misinformed about most things related to Friends and the school, people who have been told lies and therefore repeat them. You may be unable to discern fact from fiction. Many of the folks who will speak have little idea of the damage that has been done by some staff who believe that the Governing Board or Friends is a problem. I'm writing to say that this is entirely untrue because I've watched and worked with these folks closely, and I know firsthand that while accusations, lies, slander, and unprofessional conduct occur, and efforts are made to discredit people and favor others, the Governing Board is not the problem, nor has it ever been in all its iterations over the years. But because it isn't legal for the Governing Board to discuss personnel matters, staff and parents don't have the full picture of what's going on, unfortunately.

The outrageous behaviors of some staff and parents last Fall caused all non-staff board members to resign. Now that they know such a disgraceful tactic can work, they are at it again facing an entirely new board, trying to persuade everyone that the board is the problem. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have witnessed and worked closely with each iteration of the school's Governing Board for 10 years. This board is doing fine, they are sincere and professional, they have integrity, and they are focused on fulfilling their fiduciary responsibility and the mandates of the contract. Just because they are not a rubber stamp does not mean they are micromanaging or incompetent. *Au contrere*, they are reigning in finances in a very thoughtful manner and properly overseeing the activities of the director and the school.


Nevertheless, despite the school's current drama, it is making progress on various fronts – student attendance and academic achievement, financial stability, and faculty camaraderie (which has been surprising given the level of turnover and some of the bullying tactics of certain staff). Things are not actually as bad as some people are making it seem, so my hope is that you will come to see that efforts to ask the Commission to intervene in our affairs are just like squabbling siblings who go to parents to try to force them to take a side and decide who will get their way. That's the unfortunate level of maturity at work here. My hope is you will have faith that this Governing Board, just as boards before it, have the best interests of the school at heart and act in a thoughtful and responsible manner.

It is my informed opinion that the structure of the school – its governance, its finances, and its policies and procedures – are in pretty good shape right now. This school, despite whatever mistakes it has unintentionally made, has for many years been a model of professional integrity and innovation in holistic learning. We can get to a place of organizational stability again, my hope is you will trust that these boards are in good shape and have the right people to oversee

the affairs of the school, despite the counterproductive agendas and behaviors of a small minority of staff.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Kramer".

Michael Kramer

President, Friends of Kona Pacific Public Charter School



February 26, 2019

Dear Commission Members,

Due to the upcoming Commission Special Meeting, I am writing to you today to let you know where I stand in regards to the KPPCS Governing Board. My role at Kona Pacific is the Operations Assistant, and for this past school year I have also served as the school receptionist. This position has me in the front office of the school. As some would say, I am the front line of defense when it comes to parents, teachers, students and visitors. After experiencing this role for the past eight months, I have come to realize just how special of a connection I have to truly understanding what goes on at this school, and the corresponding, underlying feelings of the community members. For the past eight months, I have watched the actions of our school's Governing Board, and watched all the lines they have crossed. I have endured uncomfortable conversations with members of the Governing Board, as they attempt to take on a "friend" role, and inquire about the operations of our school. I have sat through many Governing Board meetings and watched in silence as they antagonize, and be what one can only describe as a bully to the Director of our school. I have listened to their questions that cross the line, aimed at our director, constantly deterring him from doing his job and his duty. I have time and time again felt the toxic work environment the Governing Board has built at this school, making it so that our staff members don't even feel comfortable asking the Governing Board questions without fear of retribution. The faculty members at this school should not hesitate in asking our Governing Board members for the truth. The Governing Board members of this school should not, in return, hide behind a pseudo façade in order to avoid answering our questions with honesty.

I began this school year feeling as though I was apart of a strong team that was becoming stronger every day, due to the wonderful leadership of our Director, Kim Le Bas. I experienced our operations team working tirelessly at turning this school around, giving it the chance it deserves. I felt the children flourishing in this nurturing and energetic environment. At this point, I fear that if the current Governing Board is to stay, their toxic behavior will leave our school irreparable. Please help us in giving our students, and future students, the chance to be apart of the school Kona Pacific has the potential to be.

Thank you,

Sasha Garsson

Kona Pacific Public Charter School

1 message

Lulie Learned 

Tue, Feb 26, 2019 at 2:16 PM

To: commission.mail@spscsc.hawaii.gov

Cc: kimlb@kppcs.org

To Whom it may concern,

I have been involved with Kona Pacific School since 2001.

My family moved here for the school and my husband, who was a Waldorf teacher, taught at Kona Pacific for 15 years.

We lived on the land above the School and my 3 children are all alumni.

Over the years I have volunteered and worked at the school in a variety of capacities when it was private and when it changed to a Charter school.

I have a deep love and commitment to the school, the community and to Waldorf education.

I presently work in the school office and as a substitute teacher.

The school has consistently struggled over the years and I have seen many directors come and go.

Some of the original board members from 18 years ago are still on the board.

There has always been an unhealthy separation between the board and school and at the present time is appears to be worse than ever.

Working in the office, I see and hear a lot .

I see Director Kim La Bas interacting daily with the students, problem solving with the children and teachers, bringing his Waldorf knowledge and in general going above and beyond in caring and improving the school as a whole.

I see a strong separation and lack of support from the present board, which creates a very uncomfortable, un cohesive and fear based environment to work in.

In my opinion it would be a great loss for our school and community if Kim La Bas should leave. I feel he has brought a number of positive changes and generally cares about the well being of the school and all of the students and teachers. I feel it is in the best interest of Kona Pacific School and it's students if the board was to dissolve and we begin a long and overdue fresh start.

If this does not happen, I do not feel there is much hope for Kona Pacific School to continue in a healthy way.

Thank you for taking my concerns into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Lulie Learned

Charter School Commission General Meeting Testimony

1 message

shanem@kppcs.org <shanem@kppcs.org>

Tue, Feb 26, 2019 at 2:28 PM

To: commission.mail@spscsc.hawaii.gov

To the Charter School Commission,

This testimony pertains to nutrition program and organizational structure of the school.

I have worked at Kona Pacific Public Charter School for 4 years as the Campus Steward. Both my children go to this school and my wife has worked here for 8 years.

Our Director Kim Le Bas has been at the school for one and a half years and has made many positive administrative changes to help the school know where it stands academically and financially. He has always had time for the staff and is the first Director I have observed working here, drop everything when a student needs his attention and be engaged.

Being on the leadership council and a part of the team, I have observed a lot of push back from the governing board when it comes to Kim and the accounting team looking into the financials of the nutrition program. This was meant to provide a way to see where money was coming from and where it was going. With the thought to save unnecessary expenses.

I really enjoy working with my colleagues and get satisfaction knowing I am able to support the schools community and the children's future. However the defensiveness from the board has and is creating an uncomfortable environment at the school level. I have seen members of the board come and go but the way the GB govern, has stayed the same, and has always been at odds with the Directors doing their jobs.

From my point of view it appears that the Governing Board are running the school not the Director. This is strange to me as they are mainly a group of volunteers. I don't believe they have the skill set to run a school. Where as observing Kim I can see he knows what he is doing.

Warmly

Shane Mann
Campus Steward
Kona Pacific Public Charter School

Sent from my iPhone

Dear Charter School Commission,

I am writing this letter as the current Finance Manager at Kona Pacific Public Charter School. I was contacted in February of 2018 by the prior Operations Manager at Kona Pacific Public Charter School. I had worked with her previously for 5 years at a local non-profit and know her as having the upmost integrity in everything she does. She asked if I might be interested in helping the finance team at the school. She explained that there was a financial consultant involved who was working to get the accounting cleaned up, but they also needed a bookkeeper to handle the daily duties. She had nothing but good things to say about Kim Le Bas and his leadership of the school. She told me they needed someone with my skills which include 30 + years of accounting experience. She also explained that it was a very divisive environment with the board and some founder employees creating a contentious workplace which caused her to leave. At this point, I was a little apprehensive but decided to go meet Kim Le Bas and the consultant. After that interview I decided to accept the position.

In the beginning most of the accounting work was discovery and repair. The records and accounting were in such disarray that every day the consultant and I would find new inaccuracies including missing documentation, files and errors in accounting. Over time we have made great strides in reorganizing all the accounting practices and procedures. The overall daily experience at the school is positive but there is an undercurrent of fear tactics and retaliation by certain founding employees and board members. This has continued to worsen as time goes by with their lack of support for the school and the employees who give their all. I have worked directly with boards before and I have never seen one that operates in this way. It seems to be a club where membership is only granted if you agree with the opinions of certain board members. There is not any diversity in bringing in outside opinions or career fields to the board. There seems to be a self-serving agenda that existed here before it was a public charter school and continues to this day. It is the mentality where you either agree with their politics or you are maligned publicly which is very disturbing to say the least.

One of the best examples of the board's self-serving agenda is the nutrition program. It serves approximately 40 to 50 children per day with a cost of \$150,000+ out of per pupil funding each year. The amount of food wasted and/or thrown away is incredible. I was shocked by the cost especially since the school has a huge need for more teachers. It seems unethical to me given that the school is in CSI status to not spend the per pupil funding more wisely. The finance team notified the board of these findings and they decided to keep the program bringing in more nutrition consultants costing the program even more. The nutrition program also provides vended food to three schools and a summer food program for the county. I have personally heard a board member state that they want Friends of Kona Pacific Public Charter School be known as the non-profit who feeds the island. That is awesome in theory but not at the expense of the school and education of the children. It seems to me there is a conflict of interest between the school and the nonprofit, Friends of Kona Pacific Public Charter School. I have seen first hand the school being used as a bank for the non-profit with it even being stated by their board president at a recent board meeting. This is unethical at best and at worst is unlawful.

Another nutrition issue is the building of a school kitchen and a classroom which sounds amazing. As you dig deeper into the facts, I found that it was to be two side by side kitchens with no serving area or cafeteria. To me this did not make sense because there is no way to serve the children their breakfast, lunch and snacks other than thru the food trailer which was supposed to be a temporary solution according the health department permitting process. The kitchen is going to cost approximately

2 million which leaves no funds for the classroom which was supposed to be built along with the kitchen. The school desperately needs more classroom space.

The board hired a new nutrition manager in April of 2018 to replace one who was leaving. She was a highly educated and qualified nutritionist with a vast amount of experience. She came in and attempted to manage the program but was met with much oversight and downright contempt from members of the governing board. I watched as she was treated terribly and basically pushed out of her position because of someone else's personal agenda for the nutrition program. They created a hostile work environment and blamed her for things that were out of her control. They badmouthed her performance openly to others.

Another finance issue was the lack of records for the grants we receive. These records were asked for by myself, the consultant, the auditor and the director. They were never turned over to us and lead us to be further concerned about the grants received and how they were obtained. These concerns were brought to the board's attention who did nothing about the situation. At this time the finance team has a basic list of grants but has never received copies of grant applications, grant award documentation and contact information for the granters. Last fall when a nutrition consultant was hired without the knowledge of the nutrition manager it was discovered that there was unused grant funding from USDA/ASAP Farm to School Planning which the finance team was unaware of. The grant funding is requested and funded outside of the finance department with minimal documentation and details given to us. To me this seems unethical and not best practices to have the person writing the grants also requesting the funding with no oversight from anyone.

I have a loss of confidence in the current board and their ability to govern Kona Pacific Public Charter School. I believe under their direction the school cannot succeed because their decisions are not based on what is best for the students but on their own personal agendas. Finally, I would like the commission to be aware that I was questioned by the FBI who asked many questions about individuals who are still involved with the school and the nonprofit.

Sincerely,

Edie Lupien

Testimony for the Commission Special Meeting (Agenda Item 2)

1 message

Mariah Mann  >
To: commission.mail@spcsc.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 26, 2019 at 8:56 PM

Dear Charter School Commission,

I believed that Kim Le Bas (our Director) will be the leader who helps our school succeed. Kim is the most engaged Director I have seen at our school. Every day, I sit at my desk and watch how the children, teachers and staff alike come to Kim for assistance, and he helps them all. With the support of our administration, the Nature Enrichment Program has become a signature nature-based, after-school program. It is a one-of-a-kind nature sense based learning program in the Hawaiian Islands, and we are very excited to be able to offer this program to our students.

A recent survey even showed that the Nature Enrichment Program is helping to increase our student's attendance. The attendance rate for students who attend our enrichment program daily is 95%, notably higher than students who don't attend our program, which is 89% (see attached).

I will be working with Kim to show how the Nature Enrichment Program is helping to improve our student's test scores and last weekend; I ran a CSI Nature Sense-based Learning Training for KPPCS team members.

So you can see my surprise when in December it came to my attention that the Governing Board, during their next meeting, was looking into replacing our successful signature program with an A+ (afterschool) program. I felt like I was being targeted because I supported Kim.

I am worried that people at our school will continue to be targeted by the Board and/or bullied into silence until the Charter Commission intervenes and dissolves the current Governing Board.

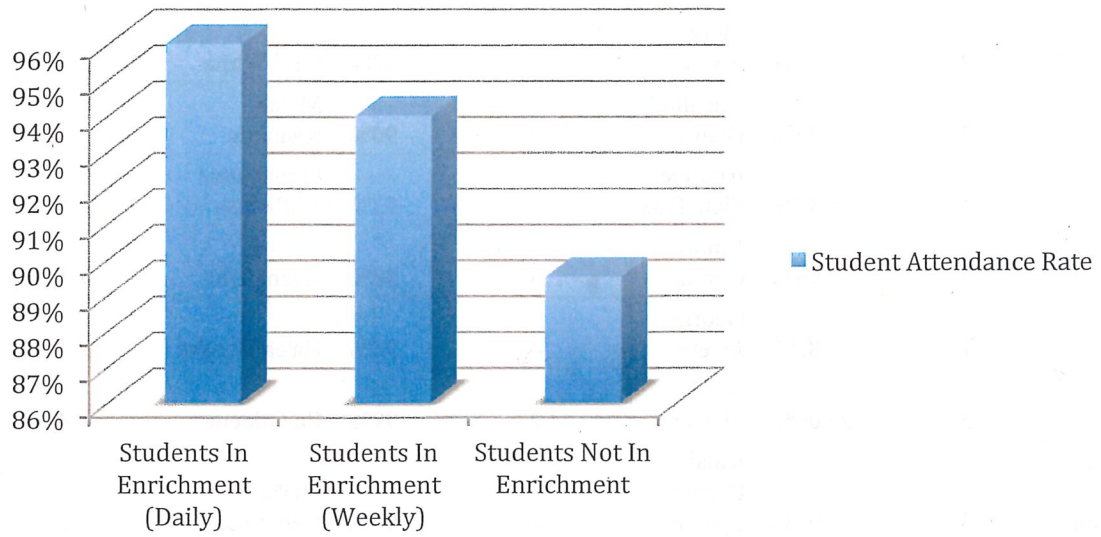
Mahalo,

Mariah Mann
Extended Day Nature Enrichment Leader
<http://www.kppcs.org/news/after-school-nature-enrichment-program/>

"Through nature connection and cultural mentoring, we provide transformational experiences that awaken people's unique gifts, deepen their relationship with nature, and empower them to enrich the health of their communities." - Wilderness Awareness School

*" Aloha is unconditional love,
for it is the outpouring and receiving of the spirit.
It is an expression of unconditional kindness, hospitality,
spirituality, cooperativeness with humanity, unity,
and graciousness that touches the souls of others."
- Managing with Aloha*

Student Attendance Rate



Petition for Testimony

1 message

Kona Pacific Concerned Community [REDACTED] > Tue, Feb 26, 2019 at 11:46 PM

To: commission.mail@spcsc.hawaii.gov

Dear Hawai'i Charter School Commission,

Please accept the following petition as testimony to protect and support Kona Pacific Public Charter School. Since many who signed the petition do not feel safe having their names public, the website link provided shows as of now 57 signatures and counting.

Community members also reported that the Secretary of the Board of Kona Pacific PCS contacted them about signing and/or suspected involvement with the petition. Intimidating and soliciting information by board members impedes an individual's freedom of speech. Thus, many parents, staff, and faculty do not feel safe to express their freedom of speech without fear of retaliation, censorship, or legal sanction by board members of Kona Pacific and Friends of Kona Pacific.

The petition's website: <https://www.change.org/p/concerned-community-members-of-kona-pacific-pcs-kona-pacific-needs-support-and-change>

The petition as stated:
Concern regarding KPPCS board

Dear Charter Commission,

This communication is being sent to express our, the undersigned's, concerns regarding the direction and actions of the KPPCS governing board. It is apparent to us that the board is following an agenda at odds with the health and well being of our school. With that in mind, we are requesting for the Board members of Kona Pacific to resign immediately. We also request that the charter commission consider stepping in to intervene and dissolve the current membership of the board. The following is a list of the main points of concern with the board at this time.

The Director for KPPCS, Kim Le Bas, requested approval for creating a Hawaiian Studies Teacher position to lead one of the three strands of KPPCS's charter's focus. The board denied the request, even though it is in support of one of the foundational aspects of the school.

A proposal for a food/nutrition program was put forth by Kim and the finance team as an alternative to the current arrangement that costs over 300,000 dollars a year, approximately 150,000 of which comes from our per-pupil money from the DOE for the education of KPPCS students. The board rejected the proposal and continues to run the current costly nutrition program.

The board is creating ad hoc committees to assess school needs even though the CNA (Comprehensive Needs Assessment) and the School Wide plan serves the purpose of addressing Kona Pacific's needs. Additionally, the committee membership is being populated without a process to assure there is not a conflict of interest and that a balanced perspective is represented. Parties and individuals used in the Board's assessments lack neutrality since the board hires their own contacts. Further, any reports being generated are not accounted for. The lack of transparency is concerning and appears intentional.

The board needs to be better informed as to its role as a governing body for the school. Recently a reputable program specifically intended for school boards was put forth as an option by the Director and the Board rejected it in favor of a non-school governance training called BoardSource. At a crucial time as this, we need the board to have the most up to date support and information on school governance.

The above list of grievances leaves us with no confidence that the current board is capable of acting in the interest of the school in a fair and balanced manner. The board is exceeding its mandate, acting unprofessionally, micromanaging and is pursuing an agenda that is not in the best interest of the students, faculty, and staff. It is our hope that the Charter Commission will act quickly to intervene and dissolve the current governing board.

Sincerely,

Members of the Kona Pacific Community

(Anonymity due to safety concerns. This includes parents, teachers, staff, and other community members of the school.)

Sincerely,

A member of the Kona Pacific Public Charter School Community

Testimony Regarding KPPCS

1 message

Marc Saks 

Wed, Feb 27, 2019 at 7:54 AM

To: commission.mail@spcsc.hawaii.gov

Dear Charter Commission,

I am writing to share my concerns regarding the governing board at KPPCS and to voice my support of the Director, Kim Le Bas.

As the 7th grade teacher at Kona Pacific, I have worked with Kim for almost two years and found his leadership to be informed, compassionate, and effective in guiding our school towards a supportive educational experience for all of us.

The board, on the other hand, has seemed intent on impeding our progress, undermining Kim, and promoting a nutrition program that has an out-sized stature compared to the needs of the school.

It is my hope that the commission can help in replacing the current board in support of our school community.

Sincerely,

Marc Saks
KKPCS Teacher

Attention Commission Staff:

My name is Julie Horrell and I have been contracted by Kona Pacific Public Charter Schools (“KPPCS”) and Friends of KPPCS as a financial consultant since November 2017. I am writing this letter in support of Director Kim Le Bas and KPPCS. I am also a parent of a student enrolled at KPPCS.

I have been working on a daily basis beside Mr. LeBas and Edie Lupien on restructuring and improving KPPCS’s financials systems and reporting. I have worked the last 20 years with over 50 companies and organizations. I am impressed at the high level of professionalism and steadfast efforts in making improvements to a organization, especially here on the Big Island. Kim is a very educated and experienced Director and has handled himself in a very respectable way, in spite of all the tension and differences of opinions.

Additionally, I would like to state that I have also worked with a multitude of organizations that have a Board of Directors in place. In this case, it is my opinion the Board has a great amount, if not, an over-involvement in decisions that should have been carried out by the Director or Managing party. I understand that this is how the structure was created, but it does not appear to be working efficiently and seems to consistently interrupt the flow of decisions and creates a mistrust among staff members.

When I first arrived, I was excited about hearing of a kitchen that was to be built. I didn’t like the fact that my daughter was eating lunch in her classroom with the same peers she spent the entire day with in the room already. To my disappointment, I found out the kitchen was a commercial kitchen. I thought it would have been more beneficial to the students to have a common place where the children could get their lunch or at least have a cafeteria where students could interact more and enjoy their lunch time; not be stuck in a classroom eating.

Unfortunately, I had the information at hand that KPPCS was only serving lunch to about 50-60 kids a day out of a total of over 200 students. I think the kitchen, on a commercial level is beneficial. I do not see the benefit to the school. It is my opinion the amount of lunches served to students does not justify the financial impact on the school. It seems to be justified though. However, spending time at the school, and eating the lunch, I am not impressed. I see so much go to waste. My daughter’s friends tell me how “gross” the food is. I’m not impressed by the lunch as well. I cannot convince myself to believe the narrative in place “boasting” nutrition and the benefits of this kitchen. I have tried to be optimistic and see the positive, but I am tainted watching other aspects suffer while KPPCS throws money at a nutrition program that is losing so much money. One week, there was a shortage of chairs and people were concerned about how much a chair would cost. KPPCS is willing to drain the bank for nutrition, but can’t afford to buy decent furniture for the students? How about some picnic tables? How about a basketball court so the kids don’t have to play in the parking lot? Why is no one asking these questions? It’s because the community and parents don’t know the real picture. What is important to the parents? A kitchen that will serve the community? Or one that would better serve our children? What about the classroom? It is now on the back burner since the kitchen takes priority.

As a parent, I could care less about feeding the community at the cost of my child’s education. As a community member, I would hate to know my meal is served at the cost of sacrificing better resources for children. I think if the organizations we serve knew how much it is taking away from the children, we would all be singing a different tune to the public.



HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Teaching Today for Hawaii's Tomorrow

1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

Corey Rosenlee
President

Osa Tui, Jr.
Vice President

Logan Okita
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

February 26, 2019

Transmitted via email
State Public Charter School Commission
Sione Thompson, Executive Director
sione.thompson@spscsc.hawaii.gov
Yvonne Lau, Chief Operating Officer
yvonne.lau@spscsc.hawaii.gov

Dear Mr. Thompson and Ms. Lau:

Re: Commission Special Meeting, February 28, 2019, Kona Pacific Public Charter School

The Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) is aware the State Public Charter School Commission (Commission) is holding a special meeting on Thursday, February 28, 2019, regarding but not limited to financial, personnel and operational issues. The HSTA would like to present the following information for consideration related to Kona Pacific's financial and employment practices.

HSTA generally takes a problem solving approach to the schools and attempts through all possible means to help support remedying the issues. HSTA has a good working relationship with Kim Le Bas, the Director of Kona Pacific. Any problems or concerns brought forth for bargaining unit 05 employees are addressed by the Director as best they can. However, there appears to be a constant interference of the Governing Board in the management and operations of the school. HSTA has observed this inappropriate interference for a number of years and believes this can be directly attributed to the frequent turnover of the school's Directors in recent years.

Specifically, HSTA is concerned with the following:

- The Governing Board believes that they have the authority to be actively involved in the day-to-day management and operations of the schools, including supervision and direction of all employees as well as employment (hiring/firing) and discipline of employees.
- The Board is directly involved in discussions of reemployment of employees for the 2019-2020 school year, including circulating a form asking for teachers to directly respond to the Governing Board with the employment intentions for the 2019-2020 school year. It is our understanding that the Board did this completely separate and independent of the Director.
- HSTA has been notified that Governing Board member(s) inappropriately went through and reviewed personnel files and removed employee's files from the school office.
- The HSTA Faculty Representative on campus was intimidated and threatened with discipline by Governing Board members because teachers were involved in a petition calling for the removal and reconstitution of the Governing Board.

- Teachers report being intimidated by Governing Board members and are fearful of expressing opinion openly, as the Governing Board often interferes with employee management and overrules Directors.

While HSTA fully appreciates and respects the role of a Governing Board; Governing Boards set policy and school direction, they should not be involved in the day-to-day operations and management of the school. The more HSTA learns about the actions of the Governing Board, the more we are concerned that this Board does not handle their fiscal obligations responsibly to ensure proper and appropriate operations of Kona Pacific Public Charter School.

We are most concerned that Kona Pacific does not seem to have a teaching environment that is supportive of educator success; the constant staff turnover (especially Directors) should be reviewed more closely by the Commission. Failure to address these matters not only has legal implications. All of these things have an impact on the ability to attract and maintain qualified teachers to ensure a robust and appropriate educational program for the students.

If the Commission has follow-up questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at aeshelman@hsta.org or 808-840-2233.

Thank you,



Andrea Eshelman
Deputy Executive Director

c: Corey Rosenlee, HSTA President
Wilbert Holck, HSTA Executive Director
Maia Daugherty, HSTA UniServ Director, West Hawaii

KPPCS

1 message

lisa jacob [REDACTED]

Wed, Feb 27, 2019 at 6:56 AM

To: commission.mail@spcsc.hawaii.gov

I have been a parent at KP since it opened as a charter school, my second child is currently in 8th grade.

During that time, I have seen so many good people-teachers, faculty, staff and families- come and go. It seems that right now the school is hanging on by a thread and yet in some ways, it also seems as strong as it's ever been. We have a good and qualified director who understands the problems the school faces and is taking the steps to get it on track. We have a strong team of teachers who are working very hard toward the same goal. And, from what I understand and perhaps most importantly, the team of teachers supports the director's leadership.

KP has tried several different styles of leadership which have, until recently, failed. What has not changed over the years is the structure of the governing board. There have been dozens of rotating, well-intended board members but it seems that the board as a whole does not support the operation of the school. I daresay that it has, at times, been an impediment to the school's success.

Thank you for your time,

Lisa Jacob

Kona Pacific PCS

1 message

Christine Kern

Wed, Feb 27, 2019 at 6:37
AM


To: commission.mail@spcsc.hawaii.gov

Aloha Comissioners,
Mahalo for taking the time and care to support our school. We need your help.

I am the parent of a 4th and 2nd grade student at KPPCS. My children have attended the school since 2016. In these three years, we have met three different directors, said goodbye to two, and made monumental effort through board meting attendance, signing petitions, writing letters to the school and the commission, and writing and circulating a letter from the parents to the KPPCS board to keep the current director Kim LeBas.

What I have witnessed through my own due diligence is an enormous lack of professionalism and proper board culture from the KPPCS board. It seems there is no training for incoming board members, and the "old guard" (returning past board members and/or members of the Friends of KPPCS board) perpetuating and encouraging bad habits.

What I have witnessed is a board that has its hands deep in the daily processes of the school, meddling, arguing and wasting both the time and energies of an effective and efficient school director.

What I have witnessed is obstructive to my children's education, and that is not tolerable. Despite the fact that KPPCS has beautiful potential to be an outstanding and unique school, I find myself

searching for other options for my children's education. How much longer should we as parents wait for the board to get their act together?

Over the past week I have been contacted by both staff and a board member, encouraged to either make comment or come to Thursday's meeting. The staff who contacted me were polite and unassuming, asked me to make my own choices but also be informed.

Gretchen Ramirez, a current KPPCS board member sent me an email with an attached letter from board president Cecelia Royale that has been written to the KPPCS team addressing recent issues and decisions of the board. The letter was long and full of big words and semantic word play. It did not take responsibility nor acknowledge the validity of both sides. It was argumentative and intractable. I was deeply unimpressed.

Please commissioners, step in and help reorganize our board, require board training for a new board, and remove the old guard. Our school will continue to flounder and will most likely fail when we have an overreaching, over controlling board whose best interests are most certainly not the keiki.

Please, I am asking the board once again to step back and give the director you hired, and then rehired, the opportunity and space to do his job.

And let's continue to ask ourselves, why in the world does the board continue to hire and then fire directors? The common denominator here is the board and more specifically, the presence of certain members who have been in the picture for too long and think they know everything . Figure it out, take a hard look at yourselves, and do better. What a massive waste of our children's time and education.

Thank you,
Christine Kern