

Anuj Khatiwada:

Hey guys. I don't know Melissa, if Aaron texted to you, but he said he might be running a couple minutes late, so we'll get started as soon as he jumps on. And if it's too terribly long, we get started without him. If we have a quorum.

Melissa Alston:

Thank you for that.

Malik Russell:

Anuj, your voice sounds terrible.

Anuj Khatiwada:

That's just my voice, man.

Malik Russell:

No, it's not. That's definitely not true.

Anuj Khatiwada:

No, yeah.

Malik Russell:

Are you okay?

Anuj Khatiwada:

Yeah. I think, I don't know how I lost my voice or started to lose my voice, but I did. But yeah, I think that's just a good cue for me to just keep my mouth shut for the most of the meeting. I see what you're doing there, Malik.

Malik Russell:

Hey, I'm very thoughtful about the way I do things. Khari, your voice I haven't heard yet, but doesn't sound good either. But no, you had a great hair day the other day, I thought I should let you know about that, but I got to let you know both ways.

Anuj Khatiwada:

You know what? I appreciate that. You win some, you lose some.

Khari Shabazz:

Anuj, that's not a good look son.

Anuj Khatiwada:

I'm sorry. What'd you say, Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

That's not a good look.

Anuj Khatiwada:

What, me trying to sneak in my sandwich? Or just my look in general?

Khari Shabazz:

Sandwich thing, the chomping...

Anuj Khatiwada:

All right, I'm going to take myself off video. I'm just getting called out too much right now.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Melissa, seven is quorum, right?

Melissa Alston:

My apologies. Yes. I didn't realize I was on mute.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Oh no. No worries. It looks like Aaron's about to jump on. So you will be quorum and he can get things started. Or, if somebody beats him, we'll get started without him.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. All right. Good evening, everybody. Apologize that I am late. Good to see everybody. Welcome to the April, it's April right? April 2021 board meeting. I think I'm quorum, if I have the count right. So I'm going to go ahead and officially call the meeting to order and I'll get us started right away here. I know a couple board members reached out to me last minute, things pop up or aren't feeling well. So there'll be joining, hopefully within 30 minutes to the hour, or so. I think we should be okay, agenda wise, so we'll just get started here and we'll loop people in, but Kisha, I partially note that for you, just so you can track attendance.

Kisha Perez:

Thank you.

Aaron Bothner:

Of course. Otherwise, I think, let's start with the grounding in our mission and vision. And I believe that is Melissa, taking us through that today.

Melissa Alston:

Yes. Good evening everyone. Our mission is, we prepare our students for college through a rigorous arts infused program. The vision is, all students will be taught by a highly effective teacher, in a nurturing environment and will achieve at high levels. Each student will develop the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for responsible citizenship and lifelong learning. The impact of our collective efforts, will fundamentally change public education. So in reflecting about this, I took an operational lens, obviously. So I think the part that most resonates with me is, the impacts of our collective efforts, will

fundamentally change public education. And I think, I go back to a thing that I've heard since I was little and the thing that's really popular and it's, it takes a village. And I really believe that. I think everyone adds value. And I think that our school is part of the village for our families.

Melissa Alston:

We always say that, we're a met family and it is something you can see, hear and feel throughout the building. And I think that for me, operationally, specifically, it's about removing obstacles so that academics can do the hard work, that they've been tasked to do. I think it's also about hiring the best people, retaining the best people and what strategies we're using for those and continuing to elevate our expectations, there. Also instilling confidence in our families, that we are a pillar for them in the community, and we always want the best for their children, especially in COVID times, happy with the level of communication and safety that we provide our scholars. We continue to increase our numbers in the building. I mean, I think that's a Testament to everyone and all that we're doing. And then other things as well, that are more tangible like finances.

Melissa Alston:

And I'm not just picking the first pencil we see to order. Maybe we can find a better deal and maybe that takes 20 more minutes out of our day to figure that out. But I think that those things are impactful, because then we're able to utilize those monies in other places. So I think that those are really the fundamental things for me. And then I think about going towards the next generation and how impactful that's going to be and what our role is in that. Meaning that, never forget where you came from, but always focus on where you're going. And I think that that is something that I'm really excited to be a part of, so that is my reflection.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. Thanks for taking it through us. Taking us through that, Melissa, and always reminds me of the myriad little things that you do, or your team does, and that everyone here does, throughout the day to make the family environment and make the school be truly something that is a life-changing thing for our students a reality. So thank you for sharing that with us, Melissa. I will now take us through the agenda for the evening, before we dive in here. So I feel like I've been saying this pretty consistently, month over month now, which is a good sign. The usual structure to our board meeting this month, wrapping up the introduction here, we'll move into the school update, where we're going through Malik, Kurt and Melissa's update, in whatever order they choose to take us through that.

Aaron Bothner:

After that, we'll transition to the education committee updates, to see if any, in addition to the school leadership updates. And then our usual committee updates, external relations provide an update on the timeline there, as well as a finance committee update. We do have an important section in the finance committee, a portion of the evening tonight, regarding budgets for next year to ensure where our school leadership can work on a timeline that is conducive to hiring and getting the team ready for next year. As folks might remember, we tend to look at salaries earlier, than looking at the full budget, just given the way the calendar unfolds. So we will be talking about that during the finance committee portion. Then we'll have public comments, some brief governance updates. There's one vote we need to take there. And then a brief executive session to discuss some confidential staff compensation information, and then we'll wrap up. Is there anything that anyone feels is missing from the agenda or should otherwise be added?

Aaron Bothner:

Okay, great. So, before I turn it over to school leadership here, I do want to start with a brief update for the board that I, along with Melissa, traded emails with our authorizer over the past month, we are, as of last week, at least, we're on the agenda for the May Regents for approval. Sounds like we're in pretty good shape for that meeting. So there's nothing further on our part that is needed, that I'm told so far, but fingers crossed. But when we're having the May board meeting, should be more or less official with our new org structure and our new direction here. So really excited to share that. And, again, kudos to everybody here, who's worked tremendously hard over the past 12 months to get us to that place. It's been a relatively smooth process, I think, and that is Testament to everybody on this call. So, great way to start this off and I think Malik, I'm turning it over to you, to take us through school leadership.

Malik Russell:

Hey, Aaron, I appreciate that. Yeah. So just want to just also just kind of settle us kind of in the three rocks, that we're going to focus on as a school, which is going to be first and foremost rigor, second, self-advocacy, making sure that each and every student really feels that they are able to advocate for themselves, to have that voice. And then lastly, community and definitely the foundation of what we do, which is... Especially in this time, I think it should really resonate with everyone, understanding of not only what you need to expect from community that you're a part of, but also what you need to give, which is a level of respect and understanding that is really important. And so these are the foundational rocks. This is what we set ourselves with on every day. And these are kind of guiding things, that we make sure that we do on a daily basis.

Malik Russell:

And yeah. Next one to move into my 30, 60, 90, which has now moved to priorities. Which will be my priorities for May. And just start by, as we move away from this 30, 60, 90 day plan, just give you kind of the buckets I'm thinking about and then some specifics around it and then obviously any questions that you have there. First, as I said, last night, my priority is the high school. Then the org chart, looking for what we're going to be moving to next year and making sure that the org chart, which we'll be speaking more in depth today, reflects the foundational rocks, as well as where we're going. Then talk about testing, which we are very excited to and Kurt, will give more depth, we'll just talk about some of my priorities and thinking about that going forward. And then the culture of the school as again, this is evaluating where we are and kind of looking towards where we want to go, as well as personnel, which is all part of the same thing.

Malik Russell:

And then really just thinking about the big things we used to do as we transition to our New Austin next generation next year. In the high school, I'm going to continue to research regarding the high school design. I've done a great bit of work, kind of this last month and have some great ideas, we want to continue that and continue having those conversations. Those conversations are actually going to also tie into my thoughts regarding the hiring on the high school principal, really just one, kind of roll up my sleeves and getting into where we are now and kind of where we want to be and what kind of design changes and personnel, we need to get there. High school principal, we're done with the description, we have reached out to some candidates, have not brought anyone in yet, but this is the process now where we are kind of identifying candidates for interviews, doing some initial screens, posting it on kind of social media and internet concepts as well.

Malik Russell:

The next... We really focused on what we're going to be doing with the SAT and ATT prep, kind of going forward. Kind of think about where we got to SAT numbers and information and data, this year from our juniors. And really just trying to come up with a plan one, how to make sure that these juniors are in a great spot for next year to apply to college and be ready for college and have applications that are ready for college. And also thinking about having a more sustainable idea of what we're going to do and think about as a school, to prepare and get ready for all of our scholars, from the PSAT to the SAT, through the ACT and kind of make sure that's kind of indoctrinated within our kind of DNA.

Malik Russell:

And part of our curriculum is still going to be focused on critical thinking, but also making sure that they are ready for these types of questions. Okay? And then personnel is still considered to observe, interact and evaluate the CPA leadership, as well as teachers, as well. And then, you continue to have meetings on graduation. Are we getting closer? There's big pushes to make this really spectacular. And so I feel like we're in good stead there. Looking at testing, continue to work with Kurt and his team, was just doing a great job. And so actually, I'm doing less and just kind of more observing what the testing culture is looking like, what test prep is looking like and how it's making sure it's tied into what we do on a day-to-day basis, really believe that we are creating a culture that's great to kind of build on.

Malik Russell:

And I think, we've talked about before for the mock tests, we were able to get 80% of the students in the building for the mock tests. That was our goal. We got above that and for the actual state tests, making sure that we get 90% of those students in the program. And then also looking to get that double digit growth on both math in the LA, and then really pushing on that and create a really culture of excellence and confidence around testing. So, if we go to the organizational chart, something we'll go into great detail today. This month, we'll start to communicate those changes to staff, with great understanding for why, also continue to source and interview for open positions and new positions. And then, we're going to be finalizing and exiting the process for returning and not returning personnel. And so that's part of what we're going to be doing here today.

Malik Russell:

That's going to enable us to move forward on that front. From a culture standpoint, we're going to continue to promote and communicate the vision to every corner of the building. And that really is just a consistency to make sure that we... We know that we need room to grow, but to make sure that we are putting a stick in the ground to make sure that people understand what we are about and what we will be about going forward and making sure that there is investment in buying at every single portion of the building, every job, every person, every piece of curriculum, every decision is going to be consistent and it's going to be part of that culture. And part of that is going to be pushing a solutions oriented can-do culture, rather than looking at obstacles, we're looking at solutions. I know that sounds corny, but it's something that you need.

Malik Russell:

And the truth is organizations, institutions, schools, and people that approach things that way, find much greater success. And then lastly is going to be the real push for a reading culture. I think the one thing that I've learned since getting into education, is if I had to homeschool my kids, I would just have them read all the time. It is the greatest builder of critical thinking, it's the greatest builder of

confidence, it's the greatest builder of experience and exposure, and making sure that within our school from K through 12 and beyond, that there is a true culture of reading in there. And so we are making sure that every single person that's in that building needs to think about and talk about and be able to reading and that's from operations, that's to math teachers, to science teachers, to our counselors. We are always going to be talking about books and that's going to be something that's going to be part of that.

Malik Russell:

And part of that is also going to be, making sure in the beginning... A foundational piece of that is going to be making sure that, every single student by the end of this year, is going to have the FMP reading assessment and so that we are all going to know where we are. And so making sure that we can make sure that, the number one indicator of how you do on state tests on the SAT, is being on level or above, on your reading level. And so we're going to make sure that, that's part of our DNA as well. Personnel. Yeah. Continue and this kind of ties into the stuff I said before, continue to communicate expectations and make sure that the bar of excellence is there. The idea is to make sure that, we are preparing kids for the greatness that's within them.

Malik Russell:

We are not dropping out a barrow. We are not looking at how other people's barrows look. We know how great our students and our community is and we want to make sure that we have that. Also, as a community and as a staff and as an institution, we have to make sure there's a safe space and an obligation. Not just, the right to communicate, an obligation to communicate, and to also put your idea forward, because we have tons of people in our building, we will make sure those ideas are heard and as an institution, we're getting those and collaborating and moving forward on those concepts. And evaluate, evaluate, evaluate, just continually understanding, also, I don't want people to be nervous about evaluation. We are always evaluating. Us as people evaluate.

Malik Russell:

And I want us to know that as a school, that we are always evaluating. I evaluate myself, I'm being evaluated and just make sure that that's what we're doing and we continue my one-on-ones, making sure that I'm in the main space of impossible and making sure I'm hearing all voices, to get the most full concept of where we are, and also make sure I'm communicating where we want to be.

Malik Russell:

We have a few things that are right from the mind, the branding and the website, really thinking hard about that, spends a lot of time with Nora, really kind of going through the branding concept and Simpatico, who's doing the website. We're thinking about how to make sure that, one embodies what we do, from a visual and aesthetic standpoint, also from a messaging standpoint, and also just make sure that, you want to get the feel when you see the website, that you see us. And I want that to also be clear about when you see our classrooms, you see us and have that go all the way through. And that's why you'll also see on there, classroom libraries. Right? And so we are making a big investment into the classroom libraries, making sure they're looking great, always sure they have great books in them, make sure that they are organized in a way that's accessible to children and making sure that reading, when you walk into our building, you'll know, reading is part of our culture, in every way, shape and form.

Speaker 1:

I have a small question about that and maybe we talked about it. Right now we're on lighthouse domains, when is that switching over?

Malik Russell:

You're talking about from a branding and website? That's...

Speaker 1:

No. Even our email address, our whole Gmail suite is basically a lighthouse domain. Is there going to be a transition to a new domain just to make sure that that's seamless?

Malik Russell:

Yes. There is going to be transitions, we'll talk through that, as we go through Simpatico with that, I believe that's going to happen on that July, 1 date. We'll make sure that everything kind of goes as smoothly as possible. If we need to give a week of kind of transition, we'll do that. I think now we're just working on like the looks of it, but we are definitely aware of the transition date and when that happens. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

And small thing, just because I think that domain is also how we log in to everything else. So board-on track, keys off that. So we just...

Malik Russell:

No, yes. That's something that is definitely on our radar. As in a school, one of the things that we have to think about all the time is making sure that as we transition in any way, shape or form, from doing interviews to doing anything else, making sure that, all of them are key together. And I think we'll be working closely with them, to make sure that happens. So that's definitely something that's front of mind for us. The other portion is, really getting a great base and me and Chris have a great time, certainly a great chance. So far, we're going to continue working on our summer plan and our summer school, as well as summer training, which we're trying to integrate and kind of also utilizing the spring as a way to kind of really make sure that our staff goes into it with momentum.

Malik Russell:

And so really coming up with a strong PD plan, a strong summer school plan and a spring training schedule, that's going to really put us to great momentum going into next year and kind of, really, one of the great things about having this kind of runway is, I want to really just make sure that there is no kind of stopping point, there should just be a momentum, kind of upward swing, it's already started and I want to continue it the entire way through. And then, we want to start having very specific discussions regarding the renewal process, things that we need to do and make sure that we're fully prepared as we do that. I'm going to work with Dan and his group on that and start having a specific meetings about that and then there's things that we need to do and what we should be expecting for that. And so that's my priorities for the month of May. Do you have any questions.

Malik Russell:

Okay. I'm going to run with that, so great. On the hiring of the new high school principal, we have a description that's out there, also we've been kind of reaching out to specific candidates, as I said, we haven't brought anybody in yet, but really, this is one of those that we just have to get right.

Malik Russell:

And I think [inaudible 00:30:10] before, when we find the right person, we got to make sure we do everything possible to get them in, because it's just such an important position for us, especially with the amount of moves we need to make in the high school. And also kind of, our concepts of growth going forward. We need to make sure that's a great hire, feel solid that, we're looking for the right person and I feel as though we'll find that person. The next portion that I was going to talk about was, I want to give you... Another thing that we're working on this month, it's kind of finalizing this, really gave a lot of thought to just thinking about how...

PART 1 OF 5 ENDS [00:31:04]

Malik Russell:

You really gave a lot of thought to just thinking about how the evaluation tool for me will work, for the board. And also making sure that that is something that we will, the tenants of it is something that we're going to utilize throughout the entire organization. And just to give a little bit of narrative around it, one of the things I wanted to balance was being cognitive of the space and time that we in, and the priorities of the moment, while still being able to provide a rubric that will be absolute. And there's just things that you should always look for from leadership. And so, the outline of what it's going to look like from a rubric standpoint, this is going to start with an overview, and a purpose of the ED evaluation, just because I believe that a narrative about that.

Malik Russell:

So let's talk about the why. It's always really important. And that's something that I want to also make sure that's rooted in evaluation system throughout our entire organization at every different level. And so, that people understand the why of the evaluation, and so that they can also give feedback on, do they feel like this was transparent? Do they feel like it really met those goals? Then having a greater detailed, probably boring understanding of what the rubric and the point system will be for the evaluation, will be in that overview section. Next from my standpoint will be a state of the school. I want to let you guys know where we are, and where we need to go. And so, that's also going to give you an insight into one, thinking about my qualities of excellent leadership, as well as also what my priorities are in the near-term, and making sure that I'm focusing on those near-term qualities as well.

Malik Russell:

Next is going to be the three to four school year priorities. What's in the now? What are my priorities for this year coming up? What do you expect to hear from me and talk about? Including the why's, and at least one quantitative goal per priority. So, there's going to be a narrative about what we need to do, what I need to do with my focus, and then also giving you a quantitative goal to link, and see if there's success compared to that goal. And that's obviously something that will be an interview process between myself and the board. Then the next portion will be excellence is our normal. And exercise is our normal, the reason why I put it there is because they've got to be high goals. You got to look really high, especially in the first year.

Malik Russell:

Are they going to be consistent? Because these standard metrics are going to be a core course across teaching and learning, across student outcomes, staff morale, financial health, and community facing outcomes. But they're going to be high goals, and we're going to have a growth component in them. But I'm never going to change a goal. You're never going to see a goal that's low. I don't think reflects true excellence. You will not ever see a goal on any kind of evaluative rubric across our entire school, and especially with me, that does not have excellence at the top of it. And then lastly, will be the qualities of excellent leadership.

Malik Russell:

There'll be three or five characteristics of leadership excellence, and a rubric, and I'm going to give a self-evaluation, and then obviously, you guys will have an opportunity to evaluate as well. And so, I felt like this was something that would... A very holistic view of evaluation, and the different tenants of it. I want to make sure I'm involved in evaluation across our organization. And also wants to make sure that we are able to talk about the now, and also talk about the forever. And so, those are kind of the way I'm thinking about it. Any questions regarding that?

Aaron Bothner:

And Malik, maybe for the benefit of everybody, kind of talk through what the timeline looks like over the next couple of months for you as well, so people know when... So board members particularly know when to expect what.

Malik Russell:

Yeah, that's great. So, I think in the last board meeting, I kind of gave a timeline. We're still in the same consistent place. Looking to have a strong, detailed draft of the entire evaluative tool by next board meeting, by May, the May board meeting, so they can have interview process, get feedback, and then it can be finalized in June.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay, great. [inaudible 00:35:24] myself and Malik, I think have talked through the elements that Malik just went through, alongside all of the other components, as Malik has gotten up to speed over the past couple of weeks. And I think collectively, the three of us felt pretty good about that. The newest way in if you don't, but otherwise looking forward to seeing this evolve over the next couple of months, so we start the next school year from a position of strength, and from the board knowing exactly where we're headed for the upcoming year, and years [inaudible 00:36:01].

Malik Russell:

Yep. And then just to be clear, the process now is, I'm coming with all the quantitative metrics. So the excellence is our normal section, I'm coming with all the evaluated metrics to be there, and then obviously I want to then go from that to edit it for what would make sense for the board, but also obviously, clearly I'm looking at all the same metrics. And the same thing goes for quality of leadership. I'm starting very expensive, and then trying to condense it down to, what are the most key important things? That I think, one, give you great insight into where we are, and how we're doing, and how I'm doing. And so, that's the process. Okay.

Malik Russell:

So, I think that, that we are good with that portion. Anybody have any more questions, or any thoughts about any of the things that I brought up? Okay, great. All right. So this is just going to be... Melissa, just quickly, is this going to be... This is my portion, or this is for Kurt? I just want to make sure.

Melissa Alston:

This is for Kurt.

Malik Russell:

Okay, great. So, yeah. And then going forward, we'll have a quarterly update piece of it. We weren't in the right space to do that now, just given when I started, but that section, we want to make sure that that will be coming. And you'll see lots of elements that will also be in the evaluation rubric in that as well. And so, now without further ado, to the person we want to hear from, and that's Kurt, who is doing a great job. And to give us an update on the school from his perspective. Thank you, Kurt.

Kurt Davidson:

Awesome. Thank you, Malik. Melissa, could you zoom in just a little bit on those slides? So, just wanted to start by sharing a little bit around our mock exam. Two weeks ago, we took a mock ELA state exam, which we brought in. As Malik shared earlier, we brought in as many students as possible. This was the week after spring break, so we know it was an ambitious goal of 80% of our students coming in. And we did meet that with our grades three through eight. You'll see how that impacts on the second slide in a moment, the overall attendance rates, and the increases in there. There's obviously a bounce on that week. So quick headlines on this, and the raw results. We're seeing a lot of significant growth in grades three through five, and some growth in grades six, and then in eight, but also grade seven has somewhat flatlined at this point.

Kurt Davidson:

And I'll share a little bit of grades three through five. This is the first year we started our insight humanities curriculum, and have been spending a lot of our professional development time and money on close reading, expanding that from the middle grades down to third, fourth, and fifth grade. Which is really, I think, starting to see some of the fruits of that labor. One of the things that we did during the mock exam was, by having students in-person, while they were remote, we had set up some really cool ways, I showed the ED committee yesterday, the different ways that... Just examples of how students were interacting online, and I don't want to steal Ellen's thunder. She can go from there. But different ways that our students are really doing this, but the transferable nature to a paper and pencil test is absolutely critical.

Kurt Davidson:

So in-person, we've been truly focusing in on the strategic reading plan for our students, and diving deep, and showing that when we're monitoring students, giving feedback on whether they're identifying the correct genre, how are their thinking jobs? What are their annotations looking like? Do they have a main idea? Is the main idea actually accurate? Which is critical. And then before they're really diving into the questioning there. So, we're very bullish on our progress in ELA. We have daily meetings in the morning and afternoon, quick 15-minute check-ins, and I attended this afternoon's ELA daily meeting, and the spirits were higher today than ever before. Our seventh grade team had their highest score

throughout all of test prep, along with our fifth grade team, today were the highest. And I'm like, if there's a day for it to be the highest, it's the Thursday before the state test on Monday.

Kurt Davidson:

So, I'm really, really feel like we are peaking at the right time. And I think one thing I just want to highlight with things, especially reemphasize what Malik said is, we're not... This work is been a built throughout the year. Now that we're back in-person with a lot more students, the level of scholar accountability, family accountability, teacher accountability is really strong, and that lag you tend to see... All right, state testings over, let's breathe. We're not jumping into the breathing. For those of you who are teacher alumns, I see Anuj smile. He knew what that feeling in May was. As soon as you hit that test, you're like, okay, we can breathe now. We're not really taking that break right now. And we're going to be continuing with the work that we were doing, not only throughout the remainder of the school year, but with a comprehensive summer school plan that we're working on with our partners from the Levenia Group as well.

Kurt Davidson:

All right. So, Melissa, you can go on there. So, looking at data, I'm going to highlight the K through eight attendance data, because we have a lot more solid practices when it comes to our monitoring maintenance and accountability for that data. And the part I wanted to highlight here is, we are largely steady when it comes to our absentee rates. We're about, I think, right around 91% average, give or take a percentage point for K-three attendance. Fairly steady across the board. But where we've been seeing a lot of improvements, are when it comes to our students who are in person. You'll notice the significant growth the week of April 5th. You'll see another bump this week. Today, for example, we had 213 students in the building. Yesterday, 218. Which, if you add up the two days for students coming in hybrid, that puts us at about 63% of our student body who is attending, at least part-time, in-person.

Kurt Davidson:

When we look at when we launched on March one, we were close to 40% of our families had opted in. So definitely we're seeing progress from families who are really coming back. And just anecdotally, we did a major push to bring them in just for one day to do the mock IA on the week of April 5th, and after that, I know Kisha received a number of calls of families who were, okay. Wow, you are actually doing COVID protocols, and ULR drove me crazy with this survey outside, making sure I filling it out. And then you made the kids sit behind these desks, and you made them wear the masks. It wasn't just something y'all are making up. So I think sometimes that really seeing things are believing it, being that we are quite strict with our COVID protocols across the board.

Kurt Davidson:

And so, that did build some strength in. Another note is, we only start on Mondays. So, a lot of the families who had reached out the week of the 12th to come back, have started this week as well. So attendance, we've really been emphasizing bringing in our students. We started Fridays in-person on the week of April 12th, where we did bring in about a hundred students on Fridays. These are students who are the ones that we consider our red flag scholars, scholars who have, obviously red flag. The ones that we have concerns on attendance, and had really missed a lot in the first semester. So, we've been emphasizing bringing them in, along with students with special needs, and our English language learners.

Kurt Davidson:

Those have been the prioritization there as well. And then we're expanding, being that we have a lot of families that may have needs around convenience, and there's a sibling, and obviously being considerate there, while still maintaining the six feet distance, despite the CDCs current recommendations dropped down to three feet distance in the classroom. We are maintaining that six feet for both staff and family comfort, and are still able to... So far have not had to turn many families down. We are at capacity on three grades right now. So when it comes to in-person kindergarten, fifth, and eighth grade, we are at capacity. But there are several grades that we are not at capacity there.

Kurt Davidson:

And then I do want to make a quick note on high school attendance. It is in the dashboard, as is K through eight, but high school attendance is lagging significantly here. We do need to note that. We've been seeing a huge increase in the in-person attendance. This being one of both Malik's and my big priorities, is getting students in the building. However, one of the side effects we've noticed, and we're currently addressing is, because the high school is set up where there's a week in-person, a week out, a week in, and week out, we're noticing patterns. Students are in a week, and then they're not just on remote the next week. They're treating it as, no, we're not doing one week every other week with school. And re-norming that expectation, because high schoolers sometimes make up some rules. So, it is on us to re-norm that. So, when you look in the dashboard, high school is significantly lagging when it comes to attendance rates. And that is our working very right now, and where we are targeting our focus area is there.

Kurt Davidson:

And then, just lastly, want to touch on some additional CPA data points. Malik alluded to the SAT and ACT scores. We gave the SAT about just over a month ago, and then we gave the ACT last week. Strong attendance rates, above 80% for both assessments. And we did receive the SAT data a couple of days ago. It was hot off the press yesterday in the education committee call, so we hadn't had much time to dive deep into it, but the summary is there are many areas for growth. And so, as Malik shared earlier, we already are working on a comprehensive plan. We have a meeting set for Tuesday to dive deep, and really look at where we can utilize the remainder of the school year, along with our summer programming. Our summer programming at met to do some... And also thinking outside the box a little bit of where we can bring in some support to see some dramatic jumps in those scores.

Kurt Davidson:

Definitely, we feel like we can see a couple of hundred point jump if we do this right over the next few months, by the time they take it again in August there. And lastly is what you see on the screen, what I've been sharing monthly. We are seeing progress. We're starting this month to see a lot more of the CUNY schools are starting to release their acceptances. Obviously, oftentimes those are schools that are backup options for many students. Along with priority option for a lot of our students who are initially pursuing community college. So we are seeing that scholarships, as I mentioned last month, does remain the focus. One of our wonderings here is, a lot of the financial aid packages are being delayed, but there is a major competitive nature around scholarships right now as well.

Kurt Davidson:

So, that is on our eyes as we are thinking right now. And I think we're now starting to turn our attention. Obviously, we don't have the spectacular, amazing high school graduation, as Malik shared, but our

attention right now is really turning to our juniors, when it comes to, for example, the ACT, SAT prep. But also, even just today, we had a meeting with a new partner, that Pathways for Purpose, that is really building the college mindset around our students, and being a strong resource for us while we continue to build that internal capacity.

Kurt Davidson:

The strong resource for us to support our students, particularly our juniors right now, so that we are not starting off next year behind. We really want to make sure that we are setting the tone early, being that the next school year for the high school is going to be looking quite different. And we want to make sure that particularly our current juniors, along with sophomores, are very much prepared for that. So, I'm excited that that partnership is up and running, and in just a couple of weeks, we'll be starting our sessions there. So those are my highlights for this month. Data is in the dashboard if you want to dive deeper into things. And that's it. Questions?

Aaron Bothner:

Kurt, could you maybe... Well, the question I'm going to ask you is, for the high school, for each of these metrics here, do we have a sense yet of what we are saying is our stake in the ground going forward? What is the very high bar here? And if the answer is yes, maybe can you give some context, some more about how you're thinking about why that should be the high bar. And if the answer is no, maybe we can talk about that in a future board meeting, but I think it would be helpful for the board to understand what a really high performing school needs to look like around these metrics, and why.

Kurt Davidson:

Well, you needed to be seeing a hundreds on everything. I think that's the first step. But I think where we would want to move beyond this is, not just looking at... I think application, that is prerequisite, you stop looking at that at a certain point, because it should be a hundred at... For our juniors, it should be at 100% before you hit 2022, right? But when it comes to acceptance, I would say a high bar ends up breaking down acceptance by type of school, and having four-year universities being at the top level. And that's where I think, as Malik's talking about goals, I'll let him speak for himself, but I'm assuming the goals are probably going to be at 100% there as well. So I think for me, high bar gets around. 100% college acceptance. And then I think that the financial side of things is absolutely important, being that when you look at research, you look at data. The biggest barrier that leads to college dropout is, obviously students not being ready there, but it's also not having the financial security.

Malik Russell:

Yeah. And I'll just give a little voice over there. Maybe, and I think Kurt did a great job of answering that question. So these numbers would be 100%, but you'll be seeing lots of different... The metrics that we'll be using will be different. And so, we can talk about that at a later date, because we need to go under the hood to really think about what they will be, but definitely will be a large percentage going to most selective schools. Then SAT, ACT scores that would need to match that. They would also be looking at more predictive concepts, so we want to start tracking this back in eighth grade from PSATs on until there will be... It will be a more thoughtful manner in there, and those goals will be rigorous.

Malik Russell:

To Kurt's point, one of the reasons why... I just want to say this, because sometimes I think people feel like, oh, you want people to go to the most selective schools, it's some kind of snobbery. Selective

schools have the most money, and they give the most money, and that is the highest barrier to going to school, and to completion and persistence. And so, that's the reason why we will be focused on that. We want to send our kids where the money's at. And then also from our standpoint, you'll also see more quantitative goals around qualitative goals, as far as how much money we are able to get each of our students, and student packages based on a lot of elbow grease. And we're a very strong college readiness program.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. Okay. Very helpful, and that certainly sounds right to me. And look forward to seeing a different set, and different set of numbers for next year. But Kurt, appreciate all your effort getting your arms around this the past few months, to get us in a position where we can have that conversation. Also, I recall my days in the [inaudible 00:54:01], what it's like to get the energy back after a break. I can only imagine what that's like after a year of changing learning environments. So, we can, and we will get everybody back. And I have faith that you and your team will do so, but know that that is a student-by-student process. So, I appreciate you keeping the energy, the bar high there, and we'll get there. We'll get there, and just know the effort that's going into that, so...

Kurt Davidson:

Great. And there was one additional thing I did need to note, the school quality report update. So this is an annual report that is shared out with with the DOE. I know Jessica will get me if I did not note this today. It is a school quality guide that the DOE releases every year. It has three areas around our school population, school survey results, along with the quality review, if that is something that is done, and then our student achievement outcomes. The gist of things this year is really, if you look, if you're searching this, and you look at this... I'll just copy the link into the chat so that y'all can see it. Really, the only tab that is valid for this school year is the first tab, and that is all of our school demographics and information.

Kurt Davidson:

So, when you're thinking about the renewal report being set-up, and the stuff that Dan takes in, and the data, some of that is taken from here, along with our state NYCD portal with things. But this is a report that is important going forward, and we want to make sure that everyone is aware that it exists. And then it also gives you insight for last school year. So it is now well over a year old, but for last school year, where we are with things. And so, when you're thinking about just conversations that we have with the authorizer around comparing our populations with the district and city average, this is a helpful tool to look at, and just overall student demographic. And then if you look at the second tab, when we have our surveys, definitely you have that. You can see this year we actually... Last year, we did give the survey to a lot of families, and teachers, and students, but they're not providing the data with that, because it was also given during the COVID period.

Kurt Davidson:

And then typically student achievement scores, all the metrics that everyone is familiar with, would be on the far right tab. So, they have one for the K through eight, and then also, which I shared, then if you just at the top, you can search Metropolitan Lighthouse for the high school. Some leisurely historical data for y'all to take a look at. But keep in mind this year is an exceptional year, being that there is not a lot of valuable information outside of demographic information, being that a lot... You'll see the red N/A for COVID, for a lot of things. So, they're also just important going forward, but want to make sure

everyone was aware of this, that it exists, and it is something that is looked at. Oh, and Jessica's not even here, so y'all are going to just have to tell her it was an amazing presentation, and they all know everything about this school quality report, right?

Aaron Bothner:

Deal.

Melissa Alston:

Okay. So I will go next. This slides that can be found in the documents folder for this board meeting, but because it has a little bit more specific retention data on it, I didn't want to put it in the packet. But you can find it there. So, this retention data... I was able to find the last two years worth of data, but the data was in two different ways. So one of them was analyzed, and the other data was raw data, the actual sheets that we use to ask the staff members, are they coming back or not? So, if you have specific questions, I may or may not be able to answer them based on the fact that the data is all over the place. But this is the summary of what I could deduce here.

Melissa Alston:

So I think, in talking about going into the 2019, 2020 school year, there were a lot of staff members that indicated yes, they would return, and they did not return. And this is something that is an anomaly. We had one staff member leave, and that staff member took a lot of our teachers with them. So that was just a one-off exception there. And then going into this school year, we didn't have anyone that said yes, they were returning, that didn't. And then that lends to what I just said, that that school year prior was just an exception. So, four staff members said that they were not returning and they actually didn't, and those staff members mostly went to district schools where a pension was available. And two staff members said that they were undecided, and they did not come back, but they did indicate that they were unsure.

Melissa Alston:

And then I just wanted to note, because there was a bit of a trend in regards to the NYU program. We had, two years ago, one NYU intern leave, and last year into this year, we had one leave as well. This is a new program that we have engaged with in the last few years. I think it's our third year now at this point. So, just been seeing that this is a trend. We want to make sure that programs like this are... We have a really good relationship with them. They know that we think that they are important, and we give them a lot of attention, because it's really important that we receive the best quality talent, so that we're able to do what we need to do in the building. And we want to retain them. So, the way the program works is that, you are to do one year of an internship, and you are to give us two years of teaching.

Melissa Alston:

So, we have the manager of talent acquisition ensuring that this is a priority for us, and that we are working well to ensure that the interns feel supported, that the program feels like we're in good standing, and things like that, just to make sure that we can eliminate this trend here. And we already are doing a lot of work with the current interns to be sure that we're putting them in the right place, one that will lend to their talent, but also ones that they'll be happy with for the next school year. So there's been a lot of work to support and negate this trend that has happened over the last couple years.

Melissa Alston:

I'm just going to skip enrollment and lottery. I'll do all the other updates, and then I'll have Kisha do those. So, they are not that many more compliance items. So we did some in just one big compliance report. It was called the court's data report. It just tells the city and the state what courses we teach in the building, and who teaches those courses. Next month, you will see that we have... Out of that then comes the certification report. They're analyzing that data, so they're able to provide us the next round of reporting that is necessary. So-

PART 2 OF 5 ENDS [01:02:04]

Melissa Alston:

Well to provide us the next round of reporting that is necessary. So future reporting, we already talked about all of these things last time, all these things are due on... The first two things are due on the end of this month, on the 30th. We'll have those submitted and the CRDC is again, very, very substantial report. It only happens to be every three years, so you can imagine how much data is required. That is something that my team is working on ahead of time, because there are a lot of things that are going to intertwine at the end of the school year, and then going into renewal. We don't want to have such a heavy lift here when we're aware of this deadline coming up for the beginning of 2022. Academic Operations, working on all of the same things.

Melissa Alston:

The big push here for Academic Operations has been testing and that support. In regards to facilities, I will allow Kisha to give that update as well. Then for me, personally, I have been working on the board recruitment strategy draft and drafting the policies that are all going to be presented to you all at the next board meeting, all the other items that I have been working on are just continuous items. Those are what you will see indicated in the not bold font and the bold font is the new stuff. Then, the Look Ahead is still the same as well. The big focus here in the Look Ahead has been the new website. We've been working with a company called Simpatico. We have now a draft of what the website's bones will look like, meaning what tabs, and where does those tabs go, and what's on there and just collecting that information.

Melissa Alston:

[Nora 01:03:43] has really been helping to head this project along with some of the operations folks and culture folks on our teams to make sure that we are going to have an amazing user-friendly website that ensures that once you look at it, you know exactly what we stand for and who we are. And then, that's what inclusive of our new logo and things like that. That's the fun stuff Kurt likes to do. He's been very involved in making sure that we have a really cute logo. That's that. I'm happy to report that since last [crosstalk 01:04:17].

Kurt Davidson:

So if you hate it, it's all my fault. It's what she's trying to say.

Melissa Alston:

Well, you said it. No. So yes. The COVID, that I'm happy to report that we've had two testing dates since the last board meeting. We've had 100% negative tests in the school. What is different from last time we

reported is that we have now been testing scholars in the building. It has been going really well. The nurses that we have, thankfully, they are just so amazing with the kids and we've really not had any issue at all. It's been really, really great. We've tested 108 scholars and staff. Just a reminder, we are not required to test at all. This is a precaution that we're doing to go above and beyond what the requirements and mandates are by the city and the state. And then, at Look Ahead, we have the DOE Virtual Visit, is coming up here before the next board meeting.

Melissa Alston:

And then, you will see in the packet a little bit later on the draft version of the board meeting calendar, which will just... It's just for you guys to look at, and it is a vote for the next board meeting. So please, if you have any comments on that, please provide those. And then, as well, the school day calendar, it is in a draft form as well in the documents section and that is something that we will approve on here coming up in the next month or so, the pediment on the DOE's calendar, them releasing their calendar. Then for talent acquisition, the feature opening we have here that we just posted that is the high school principal position. And then, we are looking to send out offer letters on the first or second week of May, pending the rest of this board meeting and those decisions that will be made today. Kisha, can you give us the lottery and enrollment update as well as the facilities please?

Kisha Perez:

Yes. Good evening everyone. For this month, we have 482 scholars enrolled in the lower school and we have 198 enrolled in the high school currently. Our goal is 676, which our actual numbers are 680 for this month. We also had our lottery on April 14th. It was virtual. We had about 18 families attend, me and Ms. [Tapeyda 01:06:51]. She is the operations associate. We presented the presentation on the lottery process. We informed the families what it's like, how many seats were available for each grade, and it was really cool because this was my first time. I got to speak to the families, the new potential families as well. After, we ran the lottery, which was also my first time. That was pretty cool. I got to see that side. I usually see the side where we meet the families and we do the applications, but this side I've never seen so it was pretty cool.

Kisha Perez:

And then at the end, I ran the lottery and we saw how many seats were available and who got accepted for a pre-offer. Melissa broke us up into little break rooms, me, [Claudia 01:07:38], and Ms. Tapeyda. We got to speak to the families and share what number they are on the wait list, or if they got a pre-offer. We're excited that a lot of our kindergartners have siblings in the school. The parents were really, really excited. This year for the lottery, we had a total of applications for the lower school, we had 943. For the high school, we had 609 total. This year, we were only under by 24 applications, which is really good compared to what we went through with COVID and everything. That's a really good number. We also, if you can see at the bottom, we have our SPED applications from the lottery. We ran the numbers and we had 132 SPED applicants for the lower school, and we had 106 for the high school. We had a total of 238 apply for our school this year.

Kisha Perez:

And then lastly, you can just see everything altogether from the total of applications to the SPED applications. So that's what I have on enrollment and lottery. For facilities, we had a visit with FDNY. They came for an open tickets that we received in the past. We had four, we got cleared three. The only one is the not having the TCO license. But this year, we also spoke with [Linda 01:09:20] and she gave us

the update for this month that they finally resubmitted to FDNY what was needed from the engineer. It's going to take about eight to 10 weeks for FDNY to... For us to hear back from FDNY. So hopefully, this is it for us to receive the TCO. And then lastly, the rooftop ceremony, we still don't have any updates, but now we have something a little better with knowing that we hoped hear back from FDNY. That's all I had for this month. Any questions?

Aaron Bothner:

No. I don't want to jinx it, but I'm growing a little more optimistic that we're going to be able to do something in September to kick off the school year in the gym. Sounds like you've made some concrete progress and we have a clearer, hopefully clearer... I don't want to say end in sight, new beginning in sight, we'll call it that.

Kisha Perez:

Yes. Yes. At least we got a number. At least we got eight to 10 weeks instead of they're working on it. That's good. Thank you everyone.

Aaron Bothner:

Great. And then, the other thing I wanted to ask, it's fine if we don't have an answer right this second. Do we have a sense yet or have we been working with [Paysik 01:10:49] on the SPED renewal and recruitment goal? And how we're positioned for that going into the renewal for next year? When again, we don't need to hash it out here. I just want to know where we're at in that.

Kisha Perez:

I don't have any updates with that yet. What about you, Melissa?

Melissa Alston:

Yeah. I have not partnered with [Dan 01:11:14], specifically, on that. It is something that [Laurie 01:11:18] brought up that she would like to see. It was actually the only kind of point for this virtual meeting that links to operations. It's mostly academic-focused. I had planned to complete a narrative that kind of discusses where we are. We have a lead at lottery with the preference and include the numbers so she can see that we're working on it. We're being very strategic, and also increasing our SPED teacher numbers, and having in, kind of in kindergarten, the entry grade, creating a different focus with teachers. Not just the pullout, but having an actual SPED teacher full-time in the classroom. So just kind of making sure that we are highlighting all of those things, but I will definitely partner with Dan as well.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. Thanks. Any other questions from board members or others for school leadership before we transition to the education committee update? Okay. Thanks Malik, Kurt, Melissa, Kisha for updates. Some wins this past month in terms of number of students who actually took the interim assessment and seeing attendance. Started to creep back up there across the full school. So again, I know this is really a day-by-day, student-by-student endeavor, as we get geared up and get ready to go to finish this year strong and head into next year. So we press on and look forward to seeing the bar get higher and higher here. Thanks to each of you for your efforts on that this month. Ellen, turn it over to you for anything that you want to add on top of that.

Ellen Chen:

Yeah. Great job to the team, obviously. Kurt briefly did mention about the new dashboard with regards to the white board dashboard. What is it called exactly, Kurt?

Kurt Davidson:

I'm sorry?

Ellen Chen:

The real-time dashboard that we're using for the test preps.

Kurt Davidson:

Oh, okay. So, yeah. Yes. There's a program that we utilize called Go Formative, where we're able to actually see what the students are submitting on an instantaneous basis, which is amazing. It's been a big game changer for us when it comes to really giving that live instantaneous feedback that you would see in a classroom. It's a little godly because you're literally seeing everything the students are doing from a ways away, even those who are in the Dominican Republic right now. We can see exactly what they're working on and give instantaneous feedback. But yeah, amazing tool for us.

Ellen Chen:

Yeah. Kurt did a great demo for us yesterday. I encourage those who are interested to please reach out and he will share it. I think that it's great that we're finally bringing technology into teaching and education, so great job. Also, I do encourage folks to check out our data dashboard as well. I think that currently, I like the way that there are layers of data breakouts that will be more transparent for us to get a clear picture of how the kids are doing. Yeah. That is all from me.

Aaron Bothner:

What Ellen is really saying with the new technology we have in the school is let's make sure that as we all hopefully get vaccinated and such, we make time in busy professional lives working with school leadership, to try to find time to get back to the school. I know some board members have already done that. So appreciate everyone doing that. I haven't made that plug in a little while. I know I'm working through my work schedule. I'm finding a day that aligns with my workshop schedule and school leadership. For everyone, you get to see a really cool new, I guess, whiteboard system that we have, but do want to make sure that we're starting to think about that, again, as the world, I guess, kind of comes back online here. Great. Wrapping education committee. Then we'll look to external relations. Aluta, there you are. Aluta, anything that you wanted to talk about for this month? Okay. As I think everyone knows that the first step in starting to fulfill our organization's strategic priority of fundraising is to actually adopt a fundraising policy.

Aaron Bothner:

In order to do so, I think we've been giving leadership team time to get their arms around the budget and the direction of the school in the year and years ahead. As that process works its way through, whichever one is going to get an update on here shortly in finance committee, well, I think the in part dual-tracking a fundraising policy alongside of that. No concrete updates on that. I know that's something on everyone's mind, but we want to make sure we're doing that with the appropriate intentionality. And so, I think there are some important blocks to tackle first, particularly with fourth

sector, getting their arms around the schools' finances, and also school leadership. But again, thinking through some of the strategic decisions they need to make about the years ahead. More to come on that. Certainly, haven't lost sight of it. Any questions about that, we can field any here, or if you'd rather talk about it offline, can do so. All right. Hearing none. That brings us to finance committee. So Shanta, take it away.

Shanta Pressley:

Good afternoon all. I missed you. Where you been? No. Okay. A general update for the finance committee. It's been a busy time for, I would say school leadership, operations, and fourth sector. They have the work in hard on the budget for next year and trying to keep up to date on funding and investments. I just want to take the time, to right now, publicly thank you all for the hard work that you have been doing has not been going unnoticed, truly, truly appreciate you guys and what you're doing. From a PPP update, I think the last update from [Bob 01:19:16] was that the portal is now open on chase. We're just waiting for them to give us our... Go ahead to do the submission. Is that right, Rob or Eugene?

Robert Keogh:

Confirmed. We've been checking your account weekly and they're just kind of going forward in a very... They're not opening it up to everybody at the same time or their system would basically freeze. We are just waiting for communication from them that it is effectively our turn to apply. We've been checking in on your accounts pretty much weekly, just waiting for that portal to open for us.

Shanta Pressley:

Awesome. Thank you so much for that update. Now, I will turn it over to Eugene or Bob to give us the March financials, including the quarterly investment report.

Eugene Mew:

Yes. I'll begin. Bob will follow with a more in-depth analysis of the upcoming budget discussion. As of March 31st, the cash balance in the chase in all of the accounts was 9.5 million, very healthy as usual, including a \$5.2 million balance in the investment accounts. The net assets for the month are \$8.7 million, which lead to very good metrics as compared to the DOE's minimum requirements. The current ratio and the debt to asset ratio are each three times higher than the DOE's minimum allowance. The debt-service coverage ratio is also very healthy at 3.09. We have cash on hand of \$9.5 million. We received five per pupil payments. We expect the sixth and final one for this fiscal year to come in any day now. Enrollment is still trending higher than budget. There's a little fluctuation between my numbers and Kisha's, but we're still above the budget amount of 676, which leads to a current \$2 million surplus.

Eugene Mew:

We're forecasting \$184,000 surplus at year-end. If we take a look at the budget versus actual report, again, the numbers... Well, yeah. Let's go... We could go there. We can look at this start, the dashboard, the financial dashboard. In addition to the ratios I just mentioned which some are also indicated on this sheet, this also gives us a year-to-year analysis of the balance sheet and the revenue versus expenses. As we see, when the balance sheet revenue, the assets are still high, they still trending at the same level as last year, expenses are down. So far, at this moment, from last year, which allows us to have a larger net equity. And then, as we look at the revenue versus expenses, we see that both revenue and expenses

are up, currently, for this year. Again, the ratios look very good compared to DOE minimal standards. Once again, enrollment, as we go further down, enrollment again is higher than budget leading us to a net surplus in terms of enrollment funding, enrollment net funding.

Eugene Mew:

Now, if we go down to the next page, the budget versus actual, so we're looking good versus forecast. The total revenue through nine months of \$10.6 million is trending very well versus our forecasted amount of 14,500,000. Expenses, total expenses of \$8.6 million is trending very well towards our forecast of \$14.3 million. The forecast is dynamic. We make changes based on any information we hear throughout the course of the year, the month. We've made some adjustments to per pupil revenue based on some fluctuations in students. We also made an adjustment to salaries based on stipend information that we received.

Eugene Mew:

Okay. Balance sheet, again, very strong, very steady, not much fluctuation there, which is a good thing. The school is operating at a very steady pace. The balance sheet does not waiver much from month to month. Lastly, if we take a look at the quarterly investment report, we see that on December 31st, the balance was 5,271,000, and in March 31st, the balance was 5,269,000. The investments are made in treasury bills, which are very secure, but as anyone who may have their own personal investments in stocks knows, this last quarter was not very good. There was a small decrease in the investment portfolio balance of \$2,000, but it is still a very steady and very secure place that the investments are made. We expect that number to, hopefully, trend higher as we move forward. Any questions? That's it.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you, Eugene.

Eugene Mew:

Yes.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you so much. Rob, anything you want to add there?

Robert Keogh:

No. I mean, I know it's unusual to see a downturn, I think, on your investment statements. It is just the nature of this market over the past quarter with equities trading at kind of an all time high. There's been just a very slight downturn in treasury and bond yields. I know it's a very nominal amount. It's like four, one hundredths of 1%, your portfolio. I don't want you to be worried about this, but I know it's probably the first time you've seen a tick downward since you kind of moved your money there. It's just the nature of the market movement, I think over quarter one of 2021, but the investments themselves are back. You're in fully invested in T-Bills. They are fully backed by the government and very secure.

Shanta Pressley:

Right. Absolutely. That's one of the reasons why we have that conservative portfolio. Thank you for that. I'm not going to ask for the approval or the motion right now. I'm going to wait and take all both at the end of the financial section. The next one, the agenda, is the 2021-'22 budget update. Leadership and

the fourth sector had put together a presentation. I'm going to turn it over to them to show you guys the start of the budget, the initial preview. Just to know, as you are going through, tonight, while we are not approving the budget, this is just for everyone to get a sense about what's happening for next year. Tonight, I would like a vote on the salaries, which will also be talked about tonight. Any questions before they start? Awesome. Thank you. All right. I'll turn it over to Malik.

Malik Russell:

Thank you, Shanta. I appreciate that. Let me make sure. Oh, great. I wasn't in mute. Perfect. Just wanted to start with... I know this has been a conversation that I walked into regarding making sure that we are compensating our people, right? And that I think is the perfect conversation because the backbone of the school and organization, especially one of them, was to reach the height set that we have. Given this great community we have, needs to make sure that we hire, retain, and maintain, and cultivate strong talent and our greatest asset as a school any principal will tell you, is the talented people that are there for you. And so, obviously, no one gets into education for money. If they do, that's probably a judgment issue for them. But you want to make sure that people feel valued and you want to make them feel that they are part of an organization that's well run and understands the value of people, and also understands the value and who we need in the building to really unlock the great things that we want to from our community. You go to the next slide, please.

Malik Russell:

Obviously, we're going to go through and we're going to get to number, and this is not me trying to hold up or hide anything, but we'll just tell you about the process here. It was this process that once again started before I got here, but once you know how much went into this. Starting December and in January, the need was identified. The need that our compensation wasn't matching what other people were doing. And even internally, was unfair for based on experience and what people were doing in their job titles. It was kind of all over the place. The issue is all this... That just makes people feel uneasy. It makes them feel unfairly treated. It also makes, from an organization standpoint, makes it seem like we're saying something that we're not saying.

Malik Russell:

And so, we conducted research and went into what is a compensation model that makes sense? What is one that's fair and stable? One that's sustainable? When do we go forward? And then, we can move into February and March, kind of when I started, we developed and finalized the pay scale. We kind of thought about that in terms of the DOE. Melissa, I think, did a bunch of work looking at what salaries were from throughout charter schools, looking very closely at what the DOE did. We wanted to make sure that we linked it to kind of the DOE and also offered a premium above that because we are, you see, totally honest. We are looking for a premium in performance above that, and a premium in talent about that as well. Additionally, as we kind of went further along, we also want to make sure our org chart represented who we are.

Malik Russell:

I started by saying, "We are about rigor. We are about self-advocacy. We're about community. We're about unlocking what we think is in our community." Our org chart needs to say that. Just to be totally honest, it did not before. Not to say that we're about the structural value and truly bring the great ideas and talent up front forward. And so, once we kind of got our org chart together, we also did sensitivity analysis, right? We started with what would be the perfect situation? What is the amount that we think

makes sense? We did sensitivity analysis based on one number of people and also amount above deal we were going to pay based on experience level. And so, we conducted that sensitivity analysis. And then, some take kind of reference, we've really... We're working hard this entire month, making sure that we reconcile our compensation structure and our org chart with our budget.

Malik Russell:

And then, now we're looking to approve the salaries. Just so you know, this is again about making sure we retain talent. We want to get ahead of this game. We want to make sure we're able to make offers to our value staff members as early as possible, and make sure that they understand that we do value them and that we'd been giving thought to their conversation, and make sure that the people we want to retain know that they are valued by a bias because of what they bring to the table. And so, that's where we are now. That's where we are putting approval process here on front. And then, maybe once you kind of have a budget approval, we will have the final budget where all aspects of it will be budgeted, will be hopefully improved. And then in June, we'll submit it to the DOE.

Malik Russell:

This is also just mostly being great with doing great slides. This is just kind of like the roadmaps. What we did is kind of a restatement, what we did before. One of the things that we did, we also wanted to make sure that we really were consistent. And so, we went through every single... We had a set of rules. We went through every single resume to make sure that we are giving people credit for their amount around the right amount of experience. And so, that also was consistent. It was the right level of experience that they were getting credit for. And also, that they would never look to someone else and say like, "Oh, you're getting this amount and I'm not getting this amount." We're done rebuilding the salary, highering position protocols based on that kind of linking it to the DOE and that consistency. And then, looking at the industry standard analysis, we also looked at what other charter schools are doing to make sure that we were in line with what they were doing as well.

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Malik Russell:

... Charter schools were doing. Make sure that we were in line with what they were doing as well. And then now in the process of placing all the current and future positions on this new scale, and this is this process here. And we partnering to build this kind of salary model, and we've done that, and now we are here asking for your approval. And then we will ask for the approval of the entire budget all encompass after that.

Malik Russell:

So next, there is an overview of what kind of changes went from an org chart standpoint. This is where we currently are. Now obviously as you guys know we don't have a principal for 9-12, but that's a position that we always knew was there, you can all see that. In K-8 there's only one assistant principal. We have two DOIs for the entire piece. We have a director of school culture and some other deans of school culture as well. On the director of operations side we also have a manager of those operations, as well as academic operations, and the manager of talent and marketing. And that's kind of looking at the top. I mean obviously we have all the teachers, and there's social workers, and lots of other people that are involved in this process, but we'll just give you from a top level of what we're doing.

Malik Russell:

So changes that we made. And so the idea here was to give our org chart a chance to be instructionally excellent. And to do that, and to really take advantage of having this K-12 concept, we needed to add more instructional support. And so you'll see in [inaudible 01:34:38] there are now three assistant principals, one that is responsible solely for K-two, which in and of itself has its own type of learning construct. Then there will be one from 3-4, which again is like a move from kind of the K-2 foundational to the testing grades, and also the building of more foundational skills in reading and writing and things of that nature.

Malik Russell:

And then going into the fifth through eighth grade, which is really where you need to get that full support to make sure they're ready when they get to 9-12, that we are ready and ready to go. And because the second that you get into high school it's about college readiness, right? The second you make that step, you need to be ready for that. And so in that space we're giving another assistant principal, and also dean of instruction for humanities, and one for STEM. All of which will be reporting to Kurt. So if you look at this overall, currently we had the one assistant principal and two dean's instructions, we're really adding two more kind of assistant principals. And so those would be internally and something like that.

Malik Russell:

Another thing that we want to do is also make sure that we're aligning. And so having a K-12 director of school culture, we're not adding a position here but just more making sure that we are fully aligned. And then again, having a college readiness person that's going to be looking at us from a K-12 concept, and really focusing on that 5-12, making sure that we're doing the things that we need to do starting in fifth grade, so we aren't catching up when we get there. And then we need to look at data. We're constantly talking about being a data driven place, we need a data specialist to make sure that we are able to look at the data that we have. We will be able to look at it across the entire school, and they will focus on it to make that move. And so the [inaudible 01:36:28] that shows the structure change, and then you can see the new positions. And so this is like an elevation of change in the structure while the new positions are highlighted and new. [inaudible 01:36:44].

Malik Russell:

All right, so we're going to go through this and we're going to go through this as a team. We're going to go through it as a team, I'm going to focus on the leaders, which I kind of already did, and just want to kind of highlight some of the things that we are adding. As I said, the K-8 model just needed more instructional support to make sure that we can really push through it, and really also focus on certain pockets of expertise and support teachers in those different areas. Additionally the data specialist is something that is truly, truly necessary. We need to be able to crunch data real-time and look in lots of different slices. That's a full-time position, it will go with testing. It will also be able to help us have the strongest possible IEP program and SPED program, and really allow us to really see the trends in market, and adjust our teachers real time without instruction to react to the data that we get.

Malik Russell:

And then as I said before, one of the things that we talked about and everyone I've heard on this board talk about is we're a K-12 program. To truly take advantage of the K-12 program we need to not only be thinking about each independent portion, but we need to be thinking about what our end point is from

K-12. That director of college readiness is that position. It's going to be a position that is going to be looking at the skills that we need to be adding bit by bit from a curriculum standpoint, from a social emotional standpoint, to make sure that we aren't trying to just react when kids get to junior and senior year in high school. That we actually have a true, smooth kind of push and that's all connected. And so that's the other portion of it. I'll let Kurt now talk about the switches that we made from an instructional standpoint for the teachers.

Kurt Davidson:

And so when it comes to the structure of the teachers, on the K-8 there is not, on quantity there is not a dramatic change, there is a lot of shifts. So we'll go through the draft org chart right now. We do have a concept of removing the self-contained social studies teachers, but moving literacy within the middle grades to a co-teaching model that is inclusive of social studies, which means humanities teacher. Which is a great opportunity to provide two folks in the classroom in the areas of greatest need, which is the areas of literacy and humanities. The secondary great news is as we work on expanding our middle school curriculum and adapting it to be a lot more similar to the work that we're doing with 3-5 and the insight curriculum that we've brought in, it really embeds the humanities as part of a holistic view there.

Kurt Davidson:

And so when we're thinking about the structure, our goal is to bring a lot more folks into the physical classroom. And you'll see with that comes with special education, these are ICT in classroom teachers. So these are teachers where we'll have a co-teaching model. There's no doubt that our SPED population is increasing, which is great and absolutely necessary when it comes to the authorizer and the requirements for renewal, but how we service our students and how we structure that is really critical. And there's a great opportunity through inclusion and inclusive practices with the ICT program there. And then we have a couple of removals, a proposal to remove the writing teacher in third and fourth grade. So in short, more or less teachers balance out when it comes to the additions and subtractions in K-8, it's just restructuring there.

Kurt Davidson:

Now with the high school there is a definite need for more support. So a lot of the things that we've been speaking about have been enriched activities for our students and having something similar to, I believe many of you saw it [inaudible 01:40:55] meeting last year pre-COVID in January. The electives we have for the middle of the school, bringing that concept in the high school area. But we also know that our students need more than just simply PE in the high school, they do need physical activity, it is mandated, and it is necessarily have another option. And would you have dance in the lower grades, and it's one of the most popular classes that we do offer there. So there's the addition of a high school dance teacher.

Kurt Davidson:

And then as part of our partnership with NYU, we do find it to be really part of having a great partnership, you see this with TFA where you have more folks in the school from the same program, you have more likelihood of folks sticking around and staying. So we're really excited about this years current set of interns and residents, and we're really excited with what they're going to be able to do next year. We already have them tentatively placed in a great role for next school year. And the idea is for us to continue to expand with NYU within the high school, being that there is obviously a great need for quality talent there. So the greatest additions are in the special education population there, the

dance teacher, and then the NYU interns, everything else balances out across the board. [crosstalk 01:42:18], oh sorry. And Melissa is next. My apologies I did not [crosstalk 01:42:21].

Melissa Alston:

For support and operations we are proposing to add one operations associate that is solely responsible for technology. We've wanted this and have seen the need for this role for a long time now. We do have our technology company that we contract comes in twice a month, so bi-weekly. But we need someone everyday, especially now with our heavy reliance on technology, I think now is the time. And if we are taking things to the next generation, this is definitely in line with that. So we're looking to add that position.

Melissa Alston:

We're also looking to do a structure change, so Malik did already speak about this earlier in the presentation, we are looking to really align K-12. We've been working to do that in small pockets, but we want to really make sure that as we go into [inaudible 01:43:26] that we are K-12 aligned. So having one director of school culture instead of one for each set of schools, K-8 and 9-12 just makes more sense. Additionally with that change we do have a need for a dean, so we are calling this another structure change. So we'd have a dean in the 9-12 instead of a director of school culture for the 9-12, and the director of school culture would be for the full K-12.

Melissa Alston:

Additionally we are looking to remove the family coordinator position, however it is a bit of a structure change in that we're shifting the responsibilities to the deans. They already do this work, it's just kind of taking it to the next level and making sure that they are aligned with families a little bit more than maybe they are right now. And I think operations does part of this job as well in making sure that the families are communicated with and we know, sorry, super embarrassing. I just got a new dog and he's ripping things apart. Sorry about that. So we are just making sure that we are completely aligned. And that also the deans are people that have been in the school for awhile and families know them, so we're just looking to make sure that the experience there is seamless. So [inaudible 01:44:55].

Malik Russell:

Okay, great. Thank you for those that overview for the changes. We'll go to the next slide. So here this is basically what we're doing from a salary breakdown. We are looking to take teachers to the DOE based on their years of experience, based on what I described before. We have a very kind of detailed, thoughtful way of looking at every resume and how many years of experience you have, and then adding 7% to that. So some of these are kind of wildly outside of the range, and so we're capping that amount plus, so a \$5,000 portion this year, but looking to do it until they're caught up over the course of years. The vast majority fall within this area as well.

Malik Russell:

Culture, ops and leaders, [inaudible 01:46:04] who's just getting a 3% increase. It was kind of a year over year increase. We have some changes that are going to be outliers, those will be kind of either people that were vastly underpaid, are changes in roles and responsibilities, which we kind of took for our entire structure changes as well. And so those are kind of the base of where the salary increases come from. The kind of thought of like, how are we going to get our compensation to be competitive with the

market? The kind of cost of living is 3%. And then obviously the new positions are structural changes and new responsibilities within those spaces.

Robert Keogh:

So I'll be [crosstalk 01:46:52]. I'll be talking about budget framework, and I appreciate this board's patients as we discuss salaries and our thought process around them. As we're looking at this budget, we do anticipate presenting about a \$15 million budget to this board next month, of which salaries comprise about 50% or 51%. So we do feel just given the size of that particular line item, it warrants a discussion with this board. I will talk just about some of the revenue assumptions that are incorporated in our budget this year, and we've kind of stacked them side-by-side so you can see movements.

Robert Keogh:

Obviously we're accounting for per pupil this year, we've received the word from the state that it is going up about 4.5%, so that's movement from \$16,123 per student up to \$16,845, which is great news. Historically the SPED per pupil rate in the city has been held flat. We anticipate that again this year, so no movement up or down. And rent assistance, we still receive 30% of the per pupil rate. Federal title funding, very much in line with what we received last year under titles one, two, three, and four. And we also have IDE funding, which offsets our costs for educating students with disabilities. Two new streams of funding this year which are very sizeable, are one time shots in the arm allocated under the CARES Act round two, which was effectively the second Trump stimulus. And the American Rescue Plan, which was funds received from the Biden stimulus.

Robert Keogh:

All in we don't know our final allocations yet, but what we have been told is to roughly expect about \$4,200 per student in this one-time federal funding. And we have the ability to take that over the next one to three years, so there is some inherent flexibility there. The primary goals of this are to offset things like learning loss that may have happened throughout the pandemic. And then we can also tag some admin salaries and the light facility related costs to this as well. So we expect a lot of flexibility in what we can spend against this grant, but it is a well-needed one-time shot.

Robert Keogh:

So this is just kind of a wrap up. And this puts a bow, I think, on the salary discussion that we just had. This is just kind of a waterfall chart so you can see what the school spent on salaries last year, and layered in costs to where we anticipate ending fiscal year '21. So raises for existing staff, getting rid of the stipend structure that we had last year, incorporating those costs into the base. And then pegging to the DOE rate plus the 7% that Malik mentioned is going to cost us about \$420,000 across everyone. And then as far as the new positions that were being added to the school, just instructionally, admin side, on the ops side, costs us about \$773,000. So you will see about \$1.2 million in increased costs between the raises and the new hires that we are proposing for next year.

Robert Keogh:

This is just a super high end budget breakdown, salaries plus the benefit load that we are looking at run at a little bit more than \$9.2 million. Other school expenses come in at about \$3 million, and utilities or the facility operating expenses that we do anticipate work out at about \$2.5 million. The revenue that we just discussed should yield the school about \$15.2 million, which kind of leads us to our summary on

the next slide. So right now we're budgeting effectively a break even budget of \$31,000, with a contingency built in. The stimulus itself affords us the ability to run this break even surplus.

Robert Keogh:

And we do realize that sustainability and growth is paramount to the school, so Malik has reached out to me to discuss some other options as far as what we're looking at in out years, and I know it's been a discussion with executive leadership and Malik as well. But I think as far as sustainability goes, obviously it's paramount and a want of this organization to grow enrollment at the high school level. So we will work to model and scenario plan for what growth looks like and how that can lead to sustainability at the organizational level.

Robert Keogh:

And then I think we're very conservative also in our out year budgeting, as far as what enrollment looks like, and even percentage of enrollments. Enrollment has always been strong at the school, we hit our enrollment targets. Just erring on the conservative side this year we assume that we hit 98% of our enrollment target, but I think we can look at what 100% enrollment looks like or increase in seats. And that revenue seeks to offset any deficit that we may have in out years. Ultimately we will be committed to a balanced budget that is in line with the organizational growth plan. So I know we spoke with the finance committee earlier this week and we provided them just some soft estimates, but those are for out years specifically, and we are committed to a balanced budget year over year.

Kisha Perez:

Can I ask Rob, sorry, on that last slide. I'm not totally familiar with the terminology like out year enrollment. And then when you're talking about increasing the number of seats, is that what the bullet point that says more aggressive per pupil rate increases means? Or is that referring to something else?

Robert Keogh:

Sure. So out years or any budgeted years that are outside and beyond are next fiscal year. So we are presenting the fiscal year '22 budgets, but what you will ultimately see is kind of a five-year strategic budget as well, which includes fiscal years, '23, '24, '25 and '26. So those other years outside of next year are what we consider out years. And then as far as out year enrollments, our decision points are what is right-sizing the high school look like? I think we budgeted flat, maybe 52 students per grade. But if the demand for seats is there and growing the high school is an organizational priority, we want to examine what enrollment above and beyond maybe some of those 52 seats look like. Does that make sense?

Kisha Perez:

Got it, yes. Thank you very much.

Robert Keogh:

Sure.

Malik Russell:

Malik or anybody else on the team, has there been any consideration to building in the opportunity for a bonus structure for teachers and/or leaders? Or is that something that's going to be down the pipe?

Malik Russell:

Yeah, I mean good question, that's something that we looked into. Obviously that's something that we want and that's something that we're going to look at down the pipe. That was one of the things that for next year we thought the priority, especially looking at renewal, was to focus on an instructional org chart that showed us to be a high rigorous kind of academic institution. And so our focus and priority was that for this year, but that is something that we certainly are looking for and have already started discussing. And as Bob was talking, as we kind of look at and get kind of more specific on growth plans that would be something that we'd definitely like to look into further.

Aaron Bothner:

And then just one follow-up for me too, again for Bob or whoever best. This is kind of the first year that we're seeing this new cost structure in place, using other kind of high-performance charters in New York as a benchmark or well-balanced budget charter schools, how does this cost structure compare? Do you feel good about where we are as step one on this growth trajectory we're talking about over the next few years?

Robert Keogh:

That's a great question, Aaron. We spoke with Shantay earlier today, our goal and our mission I think is to pay teachers above scale, and that's an organizational priority for us. I provided just some analysis based off of some of your peers, specifically like K-12 schools, single site in the Bronx, just as far as comps and what we've seen. On the comps side, I mean this makes you very, very competitive in the space to be honest. Your total salaries I think are budgeted at a little bit more than \$7 million, that constitutes about 51% of your operating expenses as your salaries as a percentage of operating expenses. Melissa, sorry I sent a second file that had the comps on it, but I can share my screen if that's easier.

Robert Keogh:

So you will see just kind of how you've run historically, Aaron. So salaries as a percentage of total expense, I think you've seen just, there's some natural growth here. And then a pointed efforts to right-size people against the DOE scale this year. So you're looking at about 51% of your total budgets here. Against some peers in the space, to be fair and to be honest, you're running a little bit higher. It's a combination of things, I think you have an amazing facility deal as well. So on the other than personnel side, I think you were running a little bit under market as far as what you're paying for rent for your facility. Just a lot of schools don't have bond deals at very good rates that can accommodate all of their students in a single facility, so I think you can afford to run high. But as far as comp, you are very competitive against your peers.

Robert Keogh:

And then as we kind of look at natural staff head count and what we're looking at year over year, I think you can say that a 7.3 to one staff to student ratio is very, very competitive. And that's a testament to Malik's staffing model and the services that you want to provide to the schools. And you can see it's almost a full employee, it's more than a full employee more of what some of your other peers in the K-12 space are actually staffing their schools with. So if anything, these numbers just demonstrate a commitment to doing what's right by the kids and staffing your school accordingly.

Malik Russell:

I'll also add that, and thank you Bob for that. I'll also add that this is a model. I kind of did some checking myself with some of the schools I've seen [inaudible 01:59:56]. I've seen numbers between kind of 53% to up to 66% as kind of the salaries, benefits, and total as a percentage of total expense. So it seems on par with that. These numbers are, these are the right numbers, but it also goes to understanding that the instructional amount is needed because it's K-12. One thing that does make it a little bit more wonky is the really small size of the two core model, especially in the high school. You don't see a lot of that in peer to peer, which kind of pushes the numbers a little bit as well. Does that makes any sense, Aaron?

Aaron Bothner:

It does and the metric overview is helpful. I think this is the dynamic between the year over year for us against the comp stat on both the percent total expense. And also the head count to enrollment ratio is what I expected knowing what you both just talked through. So that make sense to me, and I think we all know what we're committing to here in terms of future growth and what we need to do. But getting your one right in terms of what I would call rightsizing the salary expenses as Malik, as you noted at the beginning is what we set out to do. So I appreciate the overview and the breakdown. And there's a lot at stake in the future years on this, but we need to start here, and just want us all going in with that eyes wide open. So thank you to everybody for your diligence there. Others?

Kisha Perez:

I'm curious about how thinking about facilities factors into the longterm thinking? Because I know that we've had serious discussions in the past about how the school is kind of on the verge of outgrowing its current space. So as much as our current facility expenses facilitate our being able to focus on these priorities, which is really excellent, I'm curious about how you're thinking about the facility's growth in the future. Is that just adding more seats or what does that look like in terms of expansion?

Malik Russell:

So we're looking at growing the high school in particular, which will also allow us to grow the K-8. And so we are obviously looking at big kind of capital expenses in the initial growth. The truth is this is the right time, and Aaron's probably more aligned with this than anything, this is the right time to be looking for new facilities as kind of commercial rent spaces are really open given to kind of the shutdown and things of that nature. And so I think we'll still be able to do that.

Malik Russell:

And our growth plan will include what it looks like from a capital expense standpoint to an ongoing standpoint. And the truth is with a new facility and enlargement it will still be kind of on a sustainable basis, economically beneficial to what we do. Because what's great about this structure is this structure is needed for K-12, but the truth is the K-12 probably needs to be larger than just a two cohort construct. And so this will allow us to kind of right-size the model and make it kind of more sustainable, and sustainable while being rigorous. And so that's kind of what we're doing now.

Malik Russell:

But the truth is this level of instructional support is needed for the school. The truth is that it will also be able to scale up pretty easily with the same kind of level of support there, and with few additions-

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Malik Russell:

The same level of support there. And with few additions, while keeping our student ratio to staff member numbers at a really sound spot. That answer your question?

Kisha Perez:

I think so. So if I'm understanding correctly, you're saying with this foundation for growth, it'll be a bit of an economies-of-scale question as...

Malik Russell:

Yes. And it is one of those things where this is not necessarily for this to be successful, but it also allows us to grow and still be successful. That's the point of it. And so we could be, because of doing the K through 12 model.

Kisha Perez:

Very good. Thank you.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you all so much. Any other questions, budget-related? No questions. So we ready to vote on this, right? All right. Okay, so I'm first going to ask for the vote to accept the March financials. So I move that we accept the March financials as presented by fourth sector.

Anuj Khatiwada:

I second. I'm an aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you, Anuj. So I'll ask the question. Tim?

Tim Bryan:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Aaron?

Aaron Bothner:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Jessi?

Kisha Perez:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Sophia?

Sophia Huda:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Ellen?

Ellen Chen:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Constance?

Constance:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

And Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Awesome. Thank you all so much. The March financials, including the investment report have been accepted and will be filed as reported. So now, as we go into the budget, you guys have heard a lot of information tonight. But as I stated before we saw the presentation, we'd just like to approve the salary portion tonight so that we can go ahead. And as Malik said, start having the conversation about renewals at the beginning of May.

Shanta Pressley:

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So with that said, I move to approve and accept the salaries as presented for all staff, with the exception of Malik as the ED, Kurt as the principal, and Melissa as the director of operations. And this vote will allow us to authorize communication for positions and salaries for the 2021/2022 school year.

Ellen Chen:

I second, and I'm an aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you, Ellen. The question to everyone else. Anuj?

Anuj Khatiwada:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Tim?

Tim Bryan:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Aaron?

Aaron Bothner:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Jessi?

Kisha Perez:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Sophia?

Sophia Huda:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Ellen? Oh, I'm sorry. Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Constance?

Constance:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

And Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you so much. And the reason I pulled out the three leaders is so we can have that discussion in exec session, of what salaries will look like for them for the next school year. So I thank you all for your vote, for the staff. And our leadership and fourth sector, you can go forward with starting your conversations.

Shanta Pressley:

Any questions for me or for any leadership, fourth sector, before I turn it back over to Aaron? Awesome. Thank you all for your time. Aaron, I turn the meeting back over to you.

Aaron Bothner:

Great. Thanks. Thanks, Shanta. This is a big building block for the years ahead, that we have been looking at for really multiple years, for a few of us on the board. So really exciting to see this come about. It's, of course, a foundation, not a ceiling. But this is a big step forward. And I am looking forward to the impact this is going to have for students. So thank you to everybody there.

Aaron Bothner:

That wraps the finance committee portion for the April board meeting. So at this point, that brings us to public comments. Do we have any members of the public with us this evening, that would like to address the board?

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. I don't see any members of the public on our participants list, and I'm also not hearing any. So we'll wrap that section and move ahead here, onto the next. The next section here is board governance, so I'll turn it over to Jessica to take us through the minutes approval.

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Kisha Perez:

I move to approve the minutes from last month.

Aaron Bothner:

And I will second, and say my vote is aye.

Kisha Perez:

Thank you. Oh, I forgot. I have to also say aye. I am an aye. All right. Anuj?

Anuj Khatiwada:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Tim?

Tim Bryan:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Sophia?

Sophia Huda:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Ellen?

Ellen Chen:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Constance?

Constance:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Shanta?

Shanta Pressley:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Okay. And I think that's everybody, and everybody just moved to the bottom of my screen, because they turned off their video. Did I miss anyone? Is anyone abstaining or in opposition? Excellent. That was a very well-oiled machine. Congratulations, guys.

Aaron Bothner:

Month 14 of virtual meetings. We've got this down.

Kisha Perez:

Do you want to do the calendars before the Ed Law, Aaron, or shall I just continue?

Aaron Bothner:

Let me run through the calendars, because this should be quick. Just so folks know. Every year, the board votes and approves on the board meeting calendar and also the school calendar. These are usually fairly straight forward votes. Melissa has been on top of things enough to get drafts up, ahead of the vote, which will happen at the next board meeting, but want to draw people's attention to this.

Aaron Bothner:

Particularly for board members note, when you take a look at the calendar, there are a couple of months, I think it's November and February, where the meeting does not fall on the fourth Thursday, because of either a school holiday or a national holiday, which it being Thanksgiving, and then the February break. Let's take a look at those. Sorry, Ellen?

Ellen Chen:

November, December and February. Three months.

Aaron Bothner:

Yeah. Okay. Thank you. So just note those, take a look at this, make sure it works with calendars. But I think this is more or less what we've done in the past, again, with the fourth Thursday of each month. Melissa, Malik, anybody anticipating any major changes to the structure of the school calendar around number of days in school, that kind of thing, that folks should be thinking about over the next month, so that we're prepared for the vote? I know this is a work in progress.

Melissa Alston:

Yes, so unless there is any very specific changes from the DOE, this is the draft calendar for next school year. It is our pretty final calendar for next school year. We're just really waiting to ensure that we can align with the DOE, and that ties to money directly, because we do have to have a number of days for our charter. But we do pay on the side for busing, for days that are different from the DOE. So that is a concern that is part of the reason why we aligned with the DOE.

Melissa Alston:

But also, sometimes we have families that have scholars in our school and in DOE schools. And if we have, for instance, a very different winter break than they have, it causes inconvenience. So those are just the quick things that we would like to see, as far as the DOE calendar is concerned, before we feel confident in pushing this forward.

Aaron Bothner:

Great. Thanks. Thanks, Melissa. So barring any significant changes, should be all good, but please do take a look before next month.

Kisha Perez:

May I make a quick suggestion right now? Sorry, just looking at the September, October, November sequence. I'm wondering if there's any reason to not move the October meeting up one week, to the 21st. That would, I think be a four week gap from September to October, and then another four week gap from October to November, instead of five weeks and then three. Just a thought. Since people are going to be checking their calendars on this, I wanted to add that in.

Ellen Chen:

Very detail oriented, Jessi. I like that.

Aaron Bothner:

I'm fine with that, so long as board members note that and make sure that they're present at board meetings. And I know sometimes folks' months have consistent schedules, so not a bad suggestion, Jessica. Everyone file that away. Take a look at your personal calendars. If you think that's going to be an issue, maybe let me know and we'll try and work with school leadership on any changes there.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. Jessica, the floor is yours anyway, for the policy vote we need to take.

Kisha Perez:

Yes. So you may have all seen, I hope you all saw in the folder, the policies that we had for the Ed Law 2-D. This is something new this year. And I think that Melissa wanted to speak to you all about it. Go ahead, Melissa.

Melissa Alston:

Thank you. So this is one of the documents. There are a few in the folder there. So this is the actual Data Security and Privacy Policy that we would like to adopt for the school. This policy is a new policy this school year, that is to be implemented this school year. It really has to do with protecting the personal identification information of scholars. So especially now, it's even more so important with all of our scholars being online now, using Zoom.

Melissa Alston:

This is a policy that Jessica and Susan and Latoya have been working on, including myself. And there are pieces in here, I'm not sure if you looked at this before, but where it says that a link will be provided. The links are not inserted, because those policies also have to be approved, and those policies can then be posted on the website. And then we'll be able to include those links here in this document. Just in case that's a question. But the data protection officer is Latoya. She is the person that's heading this policy and the compliance around it.

Melissa Alston:

And then this policy has a lot to do with our third party vendors. So not only information that we house and have in use as a school, but very specifically to principals, contractors that we have. So right now, one of the big ones would be Alma. And then moving forward in the next school year would be PowerSchool, because we're changing from Alma to PowerSchool and Illuminate, which is going to be our data warehouse system. That's going to allow us to do a lot of great things that we're really excited about. So partnerships like those, we would want to make sure that they are aware of what Ed Law 2-D is, and that they're compliant, because we are having in our partnership with them naturally, are having to share with them a lot of scholar data. So that's super, super important.

Melissa Alston:

In regards to that, I will just go back and forth. Hopefully that's not confusing. Our Parent Bill of Rights is one of the other items that needs to be approved. This bill of rights is really what the parents can expect that we're doing to protect the data of the scholars. So it just outlines very specifically what we're going to do. And it outlines as well, we're going to put in all the safeguards, but if something happens, it gives you a very, very complete list of what we are going to do on our side to notify the parent. And then what the steps are going to be, in order to ensure that we come to a resolution, hopefully that'd be that there wasn't any breach. But if there is, what that communication and what those steps look like. That's this document as well.

Melissa Alston:

We outline here, FERPA. So this is this document here, and it really just talks about what the rights are for students and parents. And all of these items will be posted on the website. We have FERPA. That's a document we've had and a policy we've had before, but the Parent Bill of Rights is something new. So this just outlines here, what the disclosure looks like, how parents can make a complaint, which takes us to this form. So this one will be on the website. And this is how, if a parent is initiating a claim to the

privacy officer of the school, which is Latoya, they would fill out this form. They would fill out this form. And this is how the DPO will be notified, if a parent believes that a breach has occurred.

Melissa Alston:

Then we also have an internal protocol that we have created, and it's an investigation protocol. So that goes back to all of the protocols that we're trying to build out operationally for the new school. This is not included in the documents, but we do have a built-out investigation protocol that allows, if a breach does occur or a potential breach occurs, and we're needing to do an investigation. We have a set number of staff members that are included on the team, that will help support the data privacy person. And then we have very detailed steps, if this does happen, we know exactly what to do.

Melissa Alston:

Additionally, the NYSED, so that's the New York State Department of Education's chief privacy officer needs to be aware of any potential breaches. They have a very similar process. So we aligned our process to theirs, because I'm sure that their process is very vetted. So we utilized that to help us with the investigation protocol, and how we do our internal investigation is very similar to how they do theirs. And then there's obviously a timeline, which is a very quick turnaround to ensure that they're aware.

Melissa Alston:

Additionally, and something new, is that we are having to enact annual training for the staff. So all of our staff in the building have access to personally identifiable scholar information. So everyone is going to have to annually go through this. Latoya and I also talked about having quick refreshers throughout the year, quarterly, just to make sure that this is very important, and it's at the top of the mind for all of the staff that have access to this information.

Melissa Alston:

In complete, this is the actual policy. But like I said, embedded in these are these other supplemental documents. And then this document is supplemental to the policy. And this is a document that would be placed on the website, notifying parents of all of the vendors that we utilize that will house the information, just so that we can maintain full transparency. That's it for the policy.

Kisha Perez:

Thank you, Melissa. Yeah, and two quick notes. One is, I think just to dot i's and cross t's, we'll probably add a very small segment on data security and privacy for board members at the annual PD. I don't think that we deal with this really very much, but it's important in general that we all, as board members, recognize any private data and to recognize that, and know what we should and should not be saying about it is on a top-line level.

Kisha Perez:

And then the other note I would just make is that a lot of these are basically provided templates required by the new laws and policies, that have been adapted to Met specifically. So that's where a lot of these come from. And Melissa, did you still want to do the vote tonight?

Melissa Alston:

If we are confident as a board that we can pass these, then yes, I would like to do the vote tonight.

Kisha Perez:

Okay. Yes. Does anybody have any questions for Melissa about these, any general thoughts? Or would anybody like more time to spend with these documents?

Aaron Bothner:

Just two quick questions for me. One, when you say developed adjusted templates, developed and adapted, I assume with counsel?

Kisha Perez:

Yes, working with Susan, because Susan was very much a part of saying this is what they're recommending, and these are the documents that have been provided.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. Okay. I'm personally okay taking a vote on this tonight then, because I think these are important and we need a policy for them. And it sounds like we're taking it seriously.

Kisha Perez:

Anyone else? And then one last note is that Melissa, I think this was flagged by you Aaron also, but how this interacts with how we respond to general grievances, which may or may not include data, is also something that we'll be looking at going forward. Just as a side note. And looking at internal protocols for dealing with that.

Kisha Perez:

In that case, if everyone's comfortable, Melissa, if you're comfortable, I would move to approve these... Hold up. Do you have the list? I want to name these documents exactly, since I know there was a couple of extra documents in the folder. Which ones that we're approving?

Melissa Alston:

I can put it in the chat, if that's helpful.

Kisha Perez:

Perfect.

Melissa Alston:

Doing it now.

Kisha Perez:

Perfect. Thank you, Melissa. Okay. So I would move to approve the Data Security Policy, Parent Bill of Rights, complaint form, FERPA notifications, and the supplement to the Parent Bill of Rights, in compliance with the Ed Law 2-D.

Anuj Khatiwada:

I second, and I'm an aye.

Kisha Perez:

Thanks. I'm also an aye, I guess. Let's see. Sophia?

Sophia Huda:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Aaron?

Aaron Bothner:

Aye. You already asked me.

Kisha Perez:

It was a lot of thinking. Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Ellen?

Ellen Chen:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Constance?

Constance:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Tim?

Tim Bryan:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

And Shanta?

Shanta Pressley:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

Is anyone abstaining? Anyone opposed? And did I miss anyone? Excellent. All right. I think we're good to go.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. Okay, great. Another policy that we needed to work through, as Jessica noted, there are more updates that are coming, more or less as fast as Melissa can work through them with Susan. Some big ones that will be upcoming will be the handbooks, which I know everyone is working on. Everyone being school leadership, is working on. And also, the grievance policy. I had just noted that let's make sure all of these are working in concert together, going forward. That was some feedback I think we had, coming out of the past year.

Aaron Bothner:

I know everyone's well aware of that, and we'll continue to get these into place, so that we're in good shape for next school year, when we're anticipated to be fully independent here. So thanks, everybody. That brings us to the close, really of the bulk of the public portion of the meeting tonight, so appreciate. Again, we're far more prepared for these than I think we've been in a long time. And so hats off to everybody here for showing up to committees prepared, and also the board meeting prepared, and ensuring we're in good shape to make most use of our time here. So thanks to everyone's contributions to that.

Aaron Bothner:

We are going to move into an exec session here, to discuss the salaries, like Shanta mentioned. So I'll make the motion for that shortly. Shanta, who am I inviting in addition to trustees?

Shanta Pressley:

Just Bob, please.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. School leadership or no? Just to confirm.

Shanta Pressley:

No.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. Okay. So if anyone who is not included in board of trustees and Bob would like to hang out, you're welcome to. We'll be back for... I think we'll be barely brief closing. If not, thank you so much for joining us for the April board meeting. I know there's always somebody who's going to interrupt that [crosstalk 02:29:28].

Ellen Chen:

Quickly, Bob, do you have the Zoom link to our executive session right now, or no?

Aaron Bothner:

Oh, yeah.

Tim Bryan:

And also, this is Tim, and I don't have it, so maybe [crosstalk 02:29:38].

Robert Keogh:

I do not.

Ellen Chen:

Okay, Tim, it should be in your calendar. It should be in everybody's calendar as a recurring meeting, but I will forward it to you both right now.

Tim Bryan:

I didn't check there, so I'll check there.

Ellen Chen:

Okay, great. Thank you.

Tim Bryan:

Yeah.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. So if we're parting ways for the evening, have a fantastic evening. I hope you're enjoying the spring weather, getting warmer. And look forward to a significant amount of progress at the next board meeting, akin to what we've had this month. So thanks very much, everybody. Have a nice evening. And I am proposing that we move into exec session, inviting guest, Bob. Bob, how do I pronounce your last name, if you wouldn't mind?

Robert Keogh:

It's Keogh.

Aaron Bothner:

Keogh. I'm inviting guest, Bob Keogh, to join us from fourth sector. And the purpose of the executive session will be to discuss proposal for staff compensation. Do I have a second for that?

Kisha Perez:

Second, and aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Thank you. I'm an aye as well. Anuj?

Anuj Khatiwada:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Sophia?

Sophia Huda:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Shanta?

Shanta Pressley:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Tim?

Tim Bryan:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Ellen?

Ellen Chen:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

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Constance?

Constance:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Did we miss anybody? All right, folks. If you're joining exec session, let's try to get there in the next five minutes, and we'll start at 9:04. Thank you.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Bye, everybody else.

Kisha Perez:

Have a good night.

PART 5 OF 5 ENDS [02:31:25]