

Aaron Bothner:

(silence).

Aaron Bothner:

Good evening, everybody.

Melissa Alston:

Good evening.

Aluta Khanyile:

Good evening.

Aaron Bothner:

Hey, Melissa. Hey, Aluta. Giving folks a couple of minutes to just get in here and get set up and we'll get started right away here shortly. Good to see everybody this evening.

Aaron Bothner:

(silence)

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. A lot of folks are working on making the transition over from work. So hope to have people joining here soon. Oh, let me get my video up. Okay, there we go. Oh, it looks like the moon behind me. That's just a light bulb reflecting on the television screen. Okay.

Aaron Bothner:

Khari, can you hear me all right? For some reason you're showing up as, connecting to audio.

Elen Chen:

He may be just trying to connect to audio.

Aaron Bothner:

Yeah. It's been like that for a few minutes. So just wanted to make sure everything was okay on his end. I'm going to go off camera here really quick while I continue to figure out where folks are. But we're going to get rolling here regardless, shortly. I know everyone is very excited to get into the holiday weekend. Thanks for your patience.

Aaron Bothner:

(silence).

Aaron Bothner:

All right, folks. Okay, so I'm going to get us rolling here. I think a lot of folks should be in within the next five minutes or so. So, Kisha will... We're not quite at quorum. I think we need one more if I counted right there. So we'll call the meeting to order as soon as we hit that point. Otherwise, good evening,

everybody. Welcome to the May board meeting, May 2021. Getting down to, I think, the last month of the school year. So really excited to have everybody on and appreciate everybody making time as we get ready to go into what I hope is going to be a nice holiday weekend for you all.

Aaron Bothner:

Going to get us going here, like we usually do. Anuj is going to be sharing his reflection on our mission and vision this month. So as soon as he jumps on we'll go there. I'll go ahead and roll through the agenda quickly, so that we can ensure that we're set to go there and then we'll get rolling. So usual opening items here followed by school update from Malik, Kurt and Melissa on their respective outlooks on the school. Move in from there into the education committee with a couple brief updates from the education committee and the external relations committee.

Aaron Bothner:

Finance committee is where I think we'll be spending the majority of actual time this evening. We have a couple important votes here. The most important of which is, as we all know, is the vote on the rest of the budget for the upcoming school year. Follow that with public comments and then board governance, which is also fairly stacked. A lot of this is a preview for what we're going to be doing in June, but want that on everyone's radar as we wrap here. And then we have a brief executive session scheduled for the end of the meeting. Is there anything missing from the agenda that anyone feels should be added? (silence)

Aaron Bothner:

Okay, great. And as if on cue, Anuj jumped right in at the right spot there. So I'm going to put him on the spot without getting a break at all from jumping over here. Anuj, we're going to kick to you to lead us off here with the mission and vision reflection, and then I'll tee us up to get started on the meeting. Thanks.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Thanks, Master of Ceremonies. Let me pull up our mission and vision before I kind of dive into what I want to say. Our mission is that we prepare students for college through a rigorous arts-infused program. Our vision is that 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. And the impact of our collective efforts will fundamentally change education.

Anuj Khatiwada:

I think today, what I want to focus on is the skills and values necessary for responsible citizenship. I think this past year has taught us, if nothing else, we need a lot of responsible people in the world. And I think it is kind of a board, all the way through every student at the... every little... Even if they're the smallest, youngest kindergartner, it is all of our responsibilities as a community to make sure that we help to make sure that every single one of those people: students, staff, board members, community members that are involved with the school are responsible citizens.

Anuj Khatiwada:

And by being lifelong learners, I think we can help... We can be responsible citizens by being lifelong learners. So I don't think that only goes for students, I think that goes for board members, I think that

goes for teachers, I think that goes for administration and everybody in between. So that's kind of what I was thinking about today as I thought through our vision and what we expect out of everybody.

Aaron Bothner:

Great. Thanks, Anuj, for sharing some of your [crosstalk 00:14:16].

Jessica Boulet:

Sorry, can I jump in there also? Also, thank you. [crosstalk 00:14:20]. Sorry, not to interrupt the thanks. That was actually... That was cool. I liked that, Anuj. But also I wanted to make sure, I have gotten, I think, to the end of the list of people. The way that I was planning to track this ended up being a little more confusing than I thought, so I'm not sure if I missed anyone. Has anyone not shared a reflection?

Aaron Bothner:

Well, they're not going to raise their hands now because they know they're going to get picked next month.

Jessica Boulet:

You will get picked next, but you have a whole month to prepare.

Aaron Bothner:

Please, I really do. This is an important part of this to me. So if you haven't... I see Kisha volunteering.

Jessica Boulet:

Yay! Okay, yes. I was going to ask you Kisha, specifically, because I remember thinking, "Oh, I should ask Kisha," but I didn't remember if I did. That's literally [crosstalk 00:15:15].

Kisha Perez:

[crosstalk 00:15:15] before.

Jessica Boulet:

That's how good my memory is. [inaudible 00:15:19]. I would love it if you could share next month, Kisha, and then we'll start again at the top. Anuj, you get a pass since you've shared twice. And I think some other people have shared twice as well, but awesome. Thanks, Kisha.

Aaron Bothner:

All right, Jessica, thanks for a Anuj's reflection. And for those who just joined, thanks for making your way over here. I know a lot of folks are coming directly from work, so I appreciate you jumping right on. We already went through some opening items and we're now at quorum. So Kisha, I think we can go ahead and call it to order. Let's say 6:45 at this point.

Aaron Bothner:

I'm going to do my absolute best here to keep us going at a smooth pace. And in order to do that, I'm going to transition a little bit in how I open board meetings in that, what I would like to do as we kind of finish out the school year here, and kind of finish the reorganization we've gone through over the past

year, what I would like to do is actually lay out what I think are kind of some of the themes of the board meeting. And then I'm going to wrap the meeting by giving folks a preview of what's coming in the next month. So that board members who are moving month to month, feel like this is a more jointed process.

Aaron Bothner:

I think it'll be good use of time here. And I think, hopefully this keeps us more efficient and focused on task. And a good way to let folks think about what we need to talk as the board in this meeting, versus what can be handled offline or where it's going to be handled at a later date. So, first of all, wanted to share that with you all. It'll be a couple of minutes at the beginning and at the end. So for everyone who's eyes just glazed over at having to listen to me more, I saw it. But the point of this is to keep us more focused and on task.

Aaron Bothner:

So for this month, one, want to thank really everybody here. I caught up with most board members. Some of you have dodged my calls, but I've caught up with most of you this month. So great to get to kind of hear where your head's at, bigger picture. And then also, big thanks to our leadership team. This has been a big month at the school in terms of just getting ready to wrap the school year between academic testing and getting planning for next year. So, what I know about this month and having spoken with all of you is that, lots of, kind of FYI's coming in terms of policy stuff, and also heads up for June, which we all know is a big month for the annual board meeting. So be sure to track some of those as we're going through the meeting in terms of what you need to have on your radar for your respective role in June.

Aaron Bothner:

Otherwise, I think the bulk of today's meeting is going to be around number one, getting updates from school leadership, from Malik on where... all the work he's done over the past month to finalize his rubric and some other stuff, as well as Kurt and Melissa, who continue to chair through a lot of different things that need to happen from this time of year. So again, we're just encourage folks to think through, what is... If it's not something that's actionable right now, what do you need to act on at the June board meeting, or what do you need to do for your committee? What have you to be prepared for that?

Aaron Bothner:

And then lastly, the big thing that we're going to be voting on this evening is... I think it's two things. Number one, we've got some finance material to vote on. That includes the approval of the budget for next year and there's a capital spend item in there that we need to talk about. And then number two, we have some policies that we previewed at the last month that we're going to need to vote on, to approve.

Aaron Bothner:

So that's really where we're going here. I think all of this is to tee up a successful, kind of, end-of-year wrap at the board level for this, complete the reorganization we've gone through over the past year and start off next school year in a really good spot in terms of a solid foundation for the school and for our students. So that's where we're headed. And again, I'm going to try to keep us focused on what really needs to be handled here so that we can keep moving.

Aaron Bothner:

And the last thing is, I sent everyone an email about this, but really, really excited. This is a big deal that we got our official approval from the board of Regents to go ahead with everything we spent the last year planning. So, yes, that is applause to every... Everybody here played an essential role in getting to that point. And that means the work has only begun, but there was a tremendous amount that needed to happen to get to this point. And I could spend the rest of the call thanking everybody for all their work on that. So suffice to just say, everybody here should find a way to celebrate that in their own way in the upcoming weekend. That's it from me. Malik?

Aaron Bothner:

Oh, thank you. How are you doing? How's everybody doing tonight? I mean, I want an answer. I don't ask questions for no reason. I'd like to hear a yes or no. Ms. Perez, [crosstalk 00:20:26]?

Kisha Perez:

I'm doing awesome.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Visual cues. With visual cues. Thumbs up.

Aaron Bothner:

Thank you. Mr. Shabazz, how are you feeling tonight? You good?

Khari Shabazz:

Yeah, I'm feeling good. How about you?

Aaron Bothner:

Great, great. Can't be better. Can't be better. All right. Thanks a lot for spending this time this evening. I really do appreciate everybody putting in the time and to Constance, appreciate the update. Thank you. I'm more looking at Mr. Shabazz because he's looking at his phone. And Aaron, because he likes to talk and he won't answer it. So, those are the people I really focused on, but I appreciate that.

Aaron Bothner:

The... Sorry about that. So, want to just get into today and we want to go through the work that we're doing for the evaluation tool and kind of frame it as, it's something I put a lot of time and thought into, still working on really finalizing it, but I think we have a good space. And the reason why it's so important is because it's something that we're going to use and it's going to be consistent, from the way that we look at our scholarship to the way that we look at our teachers, to the way we look at our leaders, to the way we look at me. And I want it to all kind of role together, to be a culture of evaluation, and I mean a positive culture of evaluation.

Aaron Bothner:

And so I'd like to start with a PowerPoint and appreciate that. And it's like that to be something that guides us as we talk about it. As we're trying to do it and I'm trying to do consistently, want to start with the foundational rocks. Rigor, self-advocacy and community. And, really want to think about that. Also, I want to put note in the fact that you'll see the handy-dandy, brand new, Nuasin Next Generation logo. And I want to take note in that and so that it's also being spread. A lot of time went into coming up with

that, a lot of iterations, a lot of thought. And I want your feedback, as long as it's very positive, because that's where we are. So thank you for that as well.

Aaron Bothner:

So again, going to the three pillars and... Going to the next slide, that'd be great. Then rigor, self-advocacy and community. And one thing with rigor is not... Again, it's not that kind of inflexible construct, but more challenge. And it's challenging based on the great potential of the community that we have. Self-advocacy, to empower that community, to utilize all that potential, to utilize all that talent and put it in the world to make us better, right? We lose out when it's not there. And community, to truly embrace both the rights and privileges of community, as well as the obligations. They're equally important and something that I think we always need to kind of ground ourselves in. And these are kind of the guiding things. When I'm making judgments and thoughts, I try to make sure that they're always in line with those three concepts. And when, obviously, scholars always mean first, right at the center of it.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. So great. And so now we're going to the evaluation tool. Aaron thinks it's very, very exciting. And he's actually gotten me on board that it is exciting, because it says who we are, how we evaluate how we measure, right? And you have to start with yourself. And so, how would we measure me? And so I want to think about that in the context of the three rocks. And so, first rigor, assessments, right? Like, assessments, that sound great. But this idea that we're always being assessed, so we get used to it and it's not a big deal. And that it's transparent, you know what you're assessed on. You know what people are asking of you, and so you know what is required. The fact that you don't get kind of one-off, formal assessments, but you get kind of assessments throughout the entire time. We're going to have, formal assessments, but we're going to be observing and looking and evaluating at every turn. So we're always are giving each other feedback.

Aaron Bothner:

Next, the evaluation conferences. Evaluate, evaluate, evaluate. Just know that this happens the entire time. We are going to have a structure on it. It's going to be something that people can look forward to and see, "Hey, this is what I have in the beginning of the year. This is what happened in the middle year, this is what happened at the end of the year." And I think that's empowering because it makes it a discussion rather than something that's put onto you.

Aaron Bothner:

And then lastly, as discussed before, a culture of evaluation, Nuasin Evaluation Culture. We're going to have goals and they're going to be lofty goals. And everyone's going to know it, they're going to be consistent across every single person that works here. So, from school leads, to operations, to myself, to teachers, to students, everyone's going to know that that's kind of what is there and it's going to be consistent throughout the entire thing. And I think that builds community, because that builds consistency and also builds a level of fairness.

Aaron Bothner:

As I discussed a month ago, the evaluation tool is going to be into five different sections. The first is going to be an overview that gives a purpose of the evaluation. And I think it's important that people understand how we evaluate and why we evaluate. So that's going to be a portion of it that's going to be

there and that's going to be consistent throughout the evaluation process. The next is going to be a state of the school. From my perspective, where we are and where we need to go. And then given the context around Nuasin and what we want to ultimately be. And then they're going to have kind of these... In the content goals and priorities, there'll be three to four priorities in the school that we're going to talk about on a yearly basis, based on where we are and where we need to go.

Aaron Bothner:

And then, last is going to be the more absolute concept, which will be, excellence is our normal. But there's going to be a litany, which Jessica had to glaze her eyes over, litany of quantitative goals that are going to be there and they're absolute, and they're really rigorous. And they're rigorous because I don't like putting a bad goal on a concept. So, while I appreciate growth and I will obviously give great compliments to growth, I don't like ideas where we don't put the goals that we really want on paper. I would never put a goal below a true excellent mark for myself or for my children and so, therefore, I won't do it for myself in this context, and definitely not for our school.

Aaron Bothner:

And then lastly, qualities of excellent leadership. There are soft skills in here, and we need to make sure that we're thinking about the three to five characteristics that really show that. And also, kind of some self-evaluation and self-reflection portion of it that I think will also give further insight into my performance. All of which I think combine to be something that is longstanding as well as contextual. And I think it's a good format for evaluation. Next slide, please.

Aaron Bothner:

And so, the first portion of it is the overview purpose of evaluation. Now, I'm going to go into certain portions in more detail. Other ones don't make sense because we still aren't at a point where I'm giving you all the priorities and doing that portion of it. And so, just want to talk about, what the purpose of this section is going to be. I always want to start with the why. Me, personally, I believe, to be treated with intelligence and to be thoughtful and to pull the best out of people, they have to know the why you are doing things. And then transparency of how this works, and then objective measures and the rubric.

Aaron Bothner:

And so the idea is going to be a rubric that we've all seen. It's going to be across a four-point rubric. I've got to say that I am really going to be hard on myself, for sure, and hard on everybody, because I believe that I want to prepare us for true excellence and not excellence in a relative concept. Not relative to our district, not relative to DOE schools, not relative to schools that serve populations that we serve, but relative to what I know is what we need to truly be excellent. And so that rubric is going to be true. And so proficient really means you're good. It means you're very, very good. And highly effective is going to mean, I want to write a book about you. I want to see stuff. I want to hear what you say. I want to come see it. I want to bring people see you. It's going to be a Showtime concept, right? And so I just want to put that into context and that's what it's going to look like for myself and going to look like, and need it to look like for myself, because it's going to look like that for the entire school. Next slide.

Aaron Bothner:

And then, next is going to be the state of school. It's going to be where we are, it's going to be a qualitative narrative, because I just like to write qualitative stuff and use over-expressive [inaudible 00:29:09] in that language. And then also make sure that we're backing it up with quantitative evidence.

And then, realistic ambition. Realistic meaning, I am in the world, so I want to put it there. And where we're going, I need to make sure that it's grounded in realism. But it's still ambitious and it's never going to go and I'm never going to veer from that. And it's going to start with a kind of look, sound and feel, kind of with a narrative concept. What should it look like to be a great school? What should it feel like and what should it sound like? And then the quantitative goals that go behind that for that upcoming year.

Aaron Bothner:

And then back to our why, always the context. Why do we need this? We need this because we've been failing for generations at teaching and instructing these children. And has resulted in a permanent underclass. And it resulted in systemic and institutional racism. We need this because we see it every day. As we go through this last year, as we go through Floyd's death, as we go through all the protests out there, we need this.

Aaron Bothner:

There's a entire portion of our population that has been assumed to be less than, and we need to stop that. And the current field of play, when you look at entrances to college, when you look at employment, when we look at salaries, it all reflects this. And I always wanted us to understand that this is why we need this. There are schools that are made for the affluent, that are made for the aspirational classes, that don't look at the schools like the schools that I've made for us. And I want to make sure that we always come back to that why. [inaudible 00:30:43].

Aaron Bothner:

So the first portion is a three to four school year priorities. They're going to be rooted in kind of the first, which is going to be academics. And I put academic first because the outcomes are always important, important to me. Performance, performance, performance. The narrative's important, but the outcomes are performance. I am not input-driven, I'm output-driven. So that's the first thing we put it. And then we're going to push to the instruction which is going to be the pedagogy, making sure that we are creating this place that we know will result in their performance. And so, we're going to make sure that we are looking at our teachers and giving them a rubric that... I give myself a rubric to make sure the school is performing at that level.

Aaron Bothner:

Then operationally, are we efficient? Efficacy. The job of operation and to Melissa's greatness is, to remove all obstacles. And so the best thing is to make sure that... If you look at a organization that doesn't have operational success, you're looking at a not healthy organization. You're looking at a non-financial stable organization. And then culture. And this idea is investment and it's what I call, kids running the school. And that means that you want kids to be running the school because they're excited to get there. I want adults to be running the school. I want to be running the school. I want you guys to be running the school, to visit. And that's the portion of community I want to see

Aaron Bothner:

So now I'm going to go to this excellence is our normal, which is going to be built on kind of these four things. It's where... I promise, I'm going to try and be less mind-numbing, Jessica, than last time and put it more in larger groups. And so, basically, it's going to match the things that we're talking about, right? There's going to be these absolute concepts, would be academics, constructions, operations, and

culture. And so those are kind of the four buckets that we're going to try to quantify as far as our solid goals. And those goals will not change, they'll will be the same. We will show growth against the goals, but you'll never see those goals drop. You might see them get raised if we hit them, because I need more goals. But yes, you will not see those drop. Next.

Aaron Bothner:

So, excellence is our normal. And I also just like this idea of excellence is our normal, because you have to wake up feeling excellent every day and understand that that's how you do things, right? There's no other way to do it. Like, no. A good day is a excellent day, because that's what you do on a day-to-day basis. And so you'll see a litany of different academic tools that go from your K-8 or K-12. I do want to focus on, we will have a very strong reading culture, and that will be reflected at K-8 F&P. F&P is a reading concept. We will have 85% of our scholars on grade level. That'll be our goal to have, that we have a nationally recognized construct of where reading levels are. And just so you know, if you want to find an intelligent kid, find a kid that reads. If you want to find an intelligent adult, find a kid that reads. And if you also want to know that someone is good at math, find the kids that read. Want somebody that's good at writing, find the kid that reads. Reading will be at the base of everything that we do.

Aaron Bothner:

As we go through, we'll also have other national concepts as the K-12 i-Ready, which was something that was just launching this year, which will be great. And then, obviously, the all-important 3-8 Math and ELA test. You'll see that there's an 80% proficiency rate. And then for the SAT, I'm looking for an average score of 1150 and then the corresponding score for the ACT, was a average score of 23. Those to me are college-ready spaces. And that's what... We want our kids to get into competitive schools for a litany of reasons, which we'll continue this conversation about. And that's why we have these standards here.

Aaron Bothner:

Next we're going to go through the instructions. And so we're going to have a normalized teaching rubric that we will go through that will show effective teaching. And so it will be a one through four, as we talked about before, and then we had an average score of three or above is our goal. Additionally, we'll have a growth portion of it. And the goal is one half point in two of five areas. Again, as I said, it's going to be a very high level, and so want to make sure that we are really pushing our teaching-

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Aaron Bothner:

So want to make sure that we are really pushing our teaching and pushing our development as a leadership team and myself as a leader. And so I want to be scored on these things as well.

Aaron Bothner:

Next. Excellence is our normal-operations. We are coming up with an effective operations rubric. And operations is one of those really tough jobs that you just can't ever get wrong, because when you get it wrong, it's really wrong. So if you don't get your paycheck on the right day, oh everybody's real upset. That's a thing you need to do 100% of the time. And so we're going to have a comprehensive rubric on that and it's going to be 90% or above. We're also going to look at two surveys, which we'll be looking at, and then we can have lots of, as I think Jessica and Erin, we can have lots of very, very, deep

conversations about what kind of services we should use and things of that nature. But I think it's important to make sure that we are just asking people how they feel about something, because I do think that that makes a big difference.

Aaron Bothner:

And then financial health, making sure that we at least hit all the DOE metrics and that we are financially healthy. We need to be responsible, and obviously financially healthy to me does not mean that we have a ton of money in the [inaudible 00:36:16]. It means that we are effectively managing risk along the way, and also investing in our school along the way to make it better and get better results.

Aaron Bothner:

And then, budget discipline. If we have a budget, the goal is to be within 10% on either side. If I underspend, that means that I did something wrong to start. That means that there was money that I could have utilized to get better results that did not get. If I overspend, that means that I didn't understand what the budget was and what we needed to be successful. And so that budget discipline portion of it is something that's important to me and something I think that is also a part of that tool as well. Okay.

Aaron Bothner:

And then last, and certainly not least it is culture and community. Something that we talk about, it's one of the three prongs of what we talk about. And these are signs of like ... so it's going to be attendance, on time. And these things are, as I said, it's going to be going all the way through. That's for scholars and for staff. 95% of the people need to be at work every day. 95% of the students need to be at school. If you watch sports, one of the best ability you can have is availability. Can't be learning if you're not in school, and can't be learning if you're late. So the same concept. 95% of the time need to be there, on time. It sets a positive message for the entire school. Sets a positive message for you as a scholar. For us as adults we think is important. And that's why we're there on time.

Aaron Bothner:

Enrollment. That to me is investment portion. We're spending a lot of money, as we're going to talk about today, on capital expenditures. And wanted us to make sure that the community knows who we are and they're excited to be there. We provide them with a product that they want. And so we need to be at 98% or above for capacity for our goals. And that obviously changes as we are also talking about briefly in broad terms about the expansion plan as well.

Aaron Bothner:

And then retention of staff. The goal is 80%. I'm not going to lie, certain years it's going to be different. But the idea is, when we have a culture in which we are hiring the right people, we will keep the right people and they will stay there and we'll have an 80% retention rate.

Aaron Bothner:

Parent engagement. Do you want to come? Do you care about our school? Do you think that we're important? Like, hey, those of us who are parents out there, there are some meetings that go to, some meetings I don't. I want to make sure that the parents are engaged so 80% goes through. And then positivity surveys. And then also, [inaudible 00:38:44] different there's culture and community was part

of this investment, kids who do their homework and do their reading logs and exit tickets are completed. 85% of those need to be completed. They're invested in their education and we're making them understand how important it is for them. Then they will be doing that.

Aaron Bothner:

And then with that, while we're having these rigorous goals, want to make sure they're positive about the school, and the same thing with the staff so that I don't want burnout. We can't hit the rest of the numbers with that. Next.

Aaron Bothner:

Under construction, which, just so you know, is a great label. If you ever do any presentation, it looks good. It looks well thought out. It's under construction. It is thought out. The issue is I want to break this down in a separate context because it is ... I want to be thoughtful about it. And these are some of the softer qualities that I think are super important. personal competence, social competence, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship management. Making sure that we are ... and I think the other one is self-reflection. Making sure that we are really thoughtful about like, Hey, I can hear all these things, but as a leader, I still need to have these competencies. Because certainly if I'm not hitting these competencies, some of these other numbers are going to go down. And I want to make sure that I do understand there's a correlation and output is thoughtful, but I do understand there are some inputs that go into it.

Aaron Bothner:

And so I also want people to have a pleasant experience with myself and with leaders and with teachers and with students. And these are things that I think are skills that we all need to have. The next one. And then the last is qualities of excellent leadership. Qualities of excellent leadership. These are questions that will happen, these will be mostly self-reflection. And these are the things that if I'm doing my job, you'll have a positive outlook on these concepts. I demonstrate efficacy in people development. I'm developing people. People want to be here, they get better here, and they grow. That is something that's hugely important.

Aaron Bothner:

Flexibility. I have capacity and flexibility. Myself as a leader, other leaders, teachers all need to be able to become expert in the areas they never thought they would have to, and that's a portion of it. And then I need to be strategic. I need to be a strategic thinker who can problem solve because there are things on a daily basis. And we come up with them on a daily basis. We've already come up with them on a daily basis that happened that we need to be able to like, Hey, I didn't know about this, but I need to be strategic in thinking about this, I can't just be an emotional responder. I can be a strategic thinker and think about solutions rather than myself in my own field.

Aaron Bothner:

Then lastly, and maybe most importantly, I need to be a change maker and ambassador. I need to represent what the school needs to say. I need to be representative of that and that ambassador for that going forward. And so that is the kind of breakdown of the rubric in this context. And yeah, I think it's thoughtful. I think it represents what I want to represent. I think it represents what I want New Austin next generation to represent. And I think it gives both absolute context as well as relative context

and allows for thinking and really thinking about what great performance can look like and how you provide a great school.

Aaron Bothner:

And I do think it is the backbone of providing a great school is having these metrics, these thoughts around my performance and everyone else's performance as well. So I will end my spiel in my New York context, my private school New York context, there. So would like to stop here for a second and just see if people have any questions. Since I talked for a real solid, I think, seven minutes. Right, Jessica? They had seven minutes.

Ellen Chen:

Malik, I'm loving what a high goals. Very much the standard that we want to set for our school. So we'll be looking forward to seeing the progress on that. I do have a question behind the metric on proficiency. So for those with 80% proficiency, are we talking about 80% of our kids to score over 80?

Aaron Bothner:

I apologize. Yeah. So that is a ... so basically the state test is scored on a one to four, and proficient is considered a three or above. I also have metrics on percentage of fours I want as opposed to threes. And I thought that was a little bit in the weeds for here. The truth is, if we hit these metrics, we'll be in the top 5% of schools in the country.

Ellen Chen:

Okay. Okay. Thanks for the clarity.

Khari Shabazz:

Connected to that, Malik, and I have these questions just from the standpoint that the fish sort of stinks from the head. So that's why I'm asking these questions from that particular sort of-

Aaron Bothner:

I don't know if I like this conversation so far, but go ahead.

Khari Shabazz:

Bottom line for me, I saw things there that said three, four years. When did we get into the upper right-hand corner? Or when do you see that happening? Because I think you alluded to as a top 5% of the country, and I'm thinking top 5%, top 1% in the state, quite honestly. When do we get there in your estimation? And then what exactly are you doing for your own professional development? And is there something, or are there things you need from the board that can help us move your leadership?

Aaron Bothner:

Those are great questions. I think, Hey, I spent a ton of time reflecting on this. I've had the ability to ... I know it's possible because I've had the ability to ... I apologize, my phone is connected to my thing and it does crazy stuff. Sorry.

Aaron Bothner:

And so, as far as the timeframe, it's harder to say in this context because the numbers are so off from COVID. I expect to start being in sniffing range of these numbers, by sniffing, within 10 points, within two to two and a half years and hitting these numbers within four would make sense, all the way through.

Aaron Bothner:

I think we'll have pockets of these numbers earlier than that, but as far as establishing it throughout the entire time, and from my professional development, Hey, I go to anything. I read every book that's possible. If anyone comes up with something, I will look for it. If you have an idea, if you hear anything, I will push that. I will reach out to consultants in a thoughtful way. I am spending a lot of time right now thinking about and learning about the high school and learning about how school design and thinking about what that needs to look like to truly hit these numbers and hit these numbers consistently. You could hit these numbers to a card trick. I want to hit these numbers being us, which does still mean progressive conversations and progressive schooling. And to be totally honest, also at the end of that four to five year period, I want to be done with test prep, solid. Because I want it to just be, we are a preparatory school that prepares people to be ready for this.

Aaron Bothner:

And so those are the spaces. And so, I will ... yeah. I'm both a push and pull on this concept. So if anyone has any ideas, I'm for it. I will also be pushing ideas. I am going to spend some time looking at the newest science concepts, and they have a conference, this year is a little wonky, but I'm going to be going to that. Spending time thinking about high schools at high level, spending time with the people that are the best at it.

Aaron Bothner:

And so that's what I'm kind of doing that I am not too proud to beg, borrow, and steal. And so I'm doing all that. So that's kind of my perspective. Any portion of it that we get better at, I want to do it. Something I have already said to the entire staff, the one thing I'm always open to investing in and the number that you might see rise up as we go along, will be into professional development, especially around talented people. You give me a person that's talented and wants to get better at something, there's almost nothing that you ... What would you not do for that?

Khari Shabazz:

Thank you.

Jessica Boulet:

Could I ... oh, sorry. Can I follow up on that actually? I'm curious, Malik. Can you expand a little on your thinking behind that timeline? The two to four year timeline. Is that based on your experience in the past or anything particular that you're seeing right now?

Aaron Bothner:

It's based on my experience in the past. It's also based on some things that were implemented prior to ... I actually think you would have seen a big jump this year if this was a full school year, especially in LA. There are certain testing measures, I think. So what I would call ... Some of the things that you can use

to get the numbers up is there's a variability in everybody's performance. And there are things that you can do to limit that variability on a day-to-day basis, which gives you kind of quick jumps, upticks.

Aaron Bothner:

I'm also a real believer that a reading culture has a much quicker turnaround than people think. If you have a kid read 45 minutes a night for the course of a year, you will see a huge uptick in every single subject that they have. And those are spaces I think that we are ... We'll focus on transferable skills. That's already been laid that we're going to push down and we have a chance to expand upon. And so I think that that uptick is there. It's by no means easy. It's going to take lots of different things to get on the way there, but it's doable. And I think it's doable. And I want to be really clear about, I am for and about scholar-led progressive education. And that is my standard. I believe it works. It works at Dalton, it works at St. Anne's, it works at Horace Mann. It works at Andover and it works in New Austin.

Jessica Boulet:

As a lifelong reader who went to law school, I definitely can attest that you can always read more and you always see the difference. Oh man, I just went to a place.

Aaron Bothner:

Any other questions on this? [inaudible 00:50:08] will be voting on this at the [inaudible 00:50:12] board meeting, but otherwise I think, Malik, wanted to give a brief update on the high school principal.

Aaron Bothner:

Yes. We have a slide on that. Update on high school principal, which is one of the many jobs. It's one of the big portions. You guys had a chance to read my illustrious high school principal hiring plan. And when we started the process and the sourcing referral, phone and Zoom screens, we had the pre-work and the school tour observations, and then the interviews, and the board interviews will be the last portion. Where are we now? We have a total number of 81 applicants, only a total of two referrals, which we need a lot more of. And if anyone has any connections, those have been some of the best resumes that we've seen. We had 10 phone screens, three Zoom screens, and then we have three candidates already in the pre-work stage.

Aaron Bothner:

Truthfully, we're far away on this. Just from a resume standpoint, we're kind of going through this. I have not seen the person. The person here needs to be dynamic. I think this is a great job for a great person. I need to find that person. This is an opportunity to build something in a different way, and it needs to be built in a different way. And so this is not a person that can function as a plug-and-play person. I'm looking for talent more than experience and interest in commission and passion about the pedagogy and the structure and the model of high school. Even more than experience in it.

Aaron Bothner:

I am reaching out and I'm looking into, but this is also something that I want to be really clear. I'm not going to get this wrong. This can't be wrong. It's just the school is in such a place that we can't get this answer wrong. And we won't, and we'll just keep pushing and pushing and pushing and pushing and we'll get it. Because I met the people before, and I know the people exist. I just got to find them.

Khari Shabazz:

I don't want to-

Aaron Bothner:

I try to ask smart people because smart people know smart people. And I want more smart people.

Khari Shabazz:

And Malik, I don't want to throw any kind of rain on your parade, but this is just a statement for all of us to consider as we think about what Malik needs. In the marketplace in education, most of the good people are already snapped up. They've already found jobs at the schools where they want. And so what you're left with is what Jeffrey Kennedy used to call the dance of the lemons. And so that's not where we want to be. And so, although this is urgent, it's also urgent for us to sort of beat our contacts, reach out as far as wide as possible and really help recruit in this effort so that we can have someone here to lead us into the next level. So if you're feeling stressed, Malik, it's appropriate and we're here to help you out with that.

Aaron Bothner:

I'm glad you know. I'm glad you know. As a father of five, this stresses me out more than all the other things. I think this is really important. And one day I'm going to say, I'm going to get it right. Not going to get it wrong. That's not an option for that. I want to be really clear about that. So on that positive note, anybody else?

Aaron Bothner:

And Malik, as you work to finalize this before the June board meeting, if anyone has any thoughts after the meeting, how would you like them to best communicate with you?

Aaron Bothner:

The best way to communicate with me is by, I'm pretty old, so pony express works really well. You have to find one, which is hard. No, give me a call, shoot me a text. I'm always able to, as long as you're flexible with hours, I'm always able to get on the phone and have a conversation. And I love collaboration and I want that. Shoot me an email. That's also really good. Khari's shaking his head because I'm better with email than other things, but yes. So I appreciate that feedback from you, Khari, suddenly and silently, but with head nods. But yes, but just reach out. I am more than comfortable with that and we'll set up a time to talk, which is great.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay, great. Look forward to having this finalized to kick off the next school year. And it's great dialogue. I think it's laying the foundation to be in that top 5%. Great stuff.

Aaron Bothner:

And I guess there's two more things on the agenda I'm going to be saving until when we put them together and combine them with Bob's conversation, and that's going to be, another portion of getting to this 5% is going to be the expansion. And the other portion of hitting all the notes that we have is going to be with the capital expenditure portion that we're talking about. And also, talking about the

context of this gives us an opportunity as a board and as a school to also fundraise around something that's very tangible. That will be very easily sellable.

Aaron Bothner:

It's never easy to raise funds, don't get that wrong. But I think if it's something else, but I'll talk about that during that portion of it. So I appreciate your time and we can have questions and that. I just wanted to put them ... Bob put together some great numbers. I like to act like I have no idea about numbers anymore. I'm forgetting my investment banking attitude and act like I can't work on Excel anymore, but I appreciate Bob and [inaudible 00:56:03] and all they did. Now I will kick it off to Kurt, the guy who does the work. Kurt the work, see how I rhymed that? It's kind of alliteration. It's good.

Kurt Davidson:

Good evening, everybody. All right. I have a few organized smorgasbord of topics to discuss tonight. A few things really I wanted to go deep into at first. So last week we did have a visit from [Laurie 00:56:31] with the DOE, our authorizer. Had a really solid virtual visit. She visited a couple of classes, a strong ELA fourth grade ELA class, and a really great seventh grade math class. We were able to highlight, just as a Malik was alluding to, in ELA, the work over the past couple of years and really where we're showing progress and also where there's continued work to happen there. And then also in math, really good focus on the aspiration where we're trying to get with our focus on conceptual mathematics and the high level discussion there.

Kurt Davidson:

In addition to that, we had a good comprehensive discussion, Melissa, and Malik, and myself with Laurie on two separate occasions. I had an opportunity to also debrief with her on one of the observations. And I think the trend overall is, being that this is a very odd year to be going into renewal with the various data points being a bit of a challenge as a school year, we're in good shape overall. And we are just ... Our big focus is ensuring that our internal metrics, our interim assessments and the iReady, as Malik shared, are showing the work that we have done over the past couple of years, as the state tests are going to have reduced influence overall.

Kurt Davidson:

I think there's a little bit of a shame in that, in that we are feeling quite confident in our state test performance this year. We were able to have 90% of our students come in for the ELA state test, math slightly less, around 86% attendance. But I think also just looking anecdotally, we felt really confident when it comes to the students with our strategic reading plans and really accurately identifying the genre as part of the reading planet and putting really good main ideas from what we could see in there.

Kurt Davidson:

However, in math, we definitely are seeing some progress, but now that I'm directly managing the math team, this is a great opportunity for us to double down on those focused areas over the summer and into next year, the ones where the high levels of discourse and the true deep focus of conceptual mathematics as well.

Kurt Davidson:

With that said on the assessments angle of things, we do have a ton coming up in the last four weeks of school. Next week we'll have our end of year iReady K through 12. So having a large number of our students coming in the building, and also completing that over the course of the short week next week. And following that, we're going to have our math interim assessments, along with the formal regents for living environment, algebra, and then English in the high school. Then we're also launching for the first time, third through eighth grade will be doing a baseline FNP, Fountas and Pinell reading assessment, as Malik alluded to, in addition to our K through two reading assessment.

Kurt Davidson:

So lots of assessment going on over the next few weeks and great opportunities for us to get solid data points going into the summer. So in addition to looking around where we are when it comes to our assessment pieces, our attendance, not much news. Pretty stable. We've been having a decent amount of daily fluctuation. So where we have students who are out one day, but they're there the next. We've really isolated anyone who is consistently missing school and that's no longer a barrier as it was when we were fully remote. We're a good handle there.

Kurt Davidson:

However, there also has been a decent amount of fluidity when it comes to attendance, where students will be here on their in-person days, but when the remote they might be missing for in the day. So we're nearing capacity. We're at full capacity in kindergarten, first, third, one of the fifth grade classes, and eighth grade, where we're at 12 and 12, 12 students per class, per day. So we're at capacity at those grade levels and approaching capacity in others. Second grade's almost there. And so, when it comes to the hybrid instruction, we have been successful in bringing a lot more of our students in, but we want to have those higher numbers on a consistent basis.

Kurt Davidson:

We also noticed that the summer vacation season is starting a little early. The main office has been receiving a number of those JetBlue tickets from parents showing, look, you see, here's the flight going to Santo Domingo. There's been quite a few there. I'm like summer's still a month away, parents. But they will log into Zoom, we just have a few day delay there in getting them up and running. So that's anecdotal, but there's been quite a few and that's been picking up as well. So that's where we are with attendance.

Kurt Davidson:

Wanted to speak a little bit around our summer planning, being that that is my big personal project right now. We're partnering with the [Levenia 01:02:01] group to execute their summer rise program for K through eight, where we'll be continuing novel studies as we've been doing in third through fifth grade, along with close reading and guided reading. And then really connected to the math of where we're pushing to go in the future with numbers stories, and diving deep into truly students going deep into fewer problems and truly understanding the math behind what they're doing and saying goodbye to the procedural and pushing really hard into the true concepts behind mathematics.

Kurt Davidson:

So we're partnering with them. We have a really strong response from families. We've had a lot of communication. We've been sending out enrollment surveys, working with Kisha on engaging the families there. Really strong engagement with families. They're really excited. We're offering an

afternoon enrichment as well, which we typically don't do. Interestingly enough, a lot of our lower elementary families are wanting to have their students at school all day and throughout the summer. I'm not sure why that is, but we have never offered that before. And we are this year.

Kurt Davidson:

I think one of the challenges is we're really trying to get our teachers onboard. We have a nice incentive package for that financially, but as can be expected, our level of burnout right now with staff is pretty high. And I'm sure you see, if you follow Chalkbeat or any of the other education blogs in New York, they've seen that with the DOE as well.

Kurt Davidson:

So as we are going through the offer letters, I had my sales pitch with my a little form. Like, here's the pitch. Here's how working summer school will benefit you. And some were like, yeah, no, I'm going to be in Spain. Thank you very much. Or I'm going to be ... I'm taking my daughter to Virginia Beach and we need to be away from the city. So I think there's a lot of teachers who are opting out or that, so we're going to be in an okay place, but that is something that is of top of mind there.

Kurt Davidson:

So also in additional planning in K through eight summer school, I'm working heavily on the high school program, and the vision around this is really targeting what's needed. I know we shared last month our SAT scores. We did receive ACT scores late last week. The good news, bad news is that, good news is there's a lot of alignment, students around performance on ACT and SAT. So we didn't see a lot of variability between the different assessments. Bad news is the alignment wasn't so great. And the performance is not even remotely close to where we need to be. And we-

Aaron Bothner:

[inaudible 01:04:52] Just so you know, that was bad news, bad news. So the alignment was poor performance on SAT, and it was definitely poor performance on ACT. Sometimes people will think that there are certain educational facilities that might focus better and we see high performance on the ACT based on the subject matter and how they do the tests. We did not see that. And so there's more consistency of bad performance. So I just wanted to put that out there so it's clear just for people that are ... Kurt was saying that, but he was being funny saying it. And so I just wanted to make sure that everybody understood that it's more dire now. Because you would hope that at least there was some, Hey, the SATs are a different type of test that might ... different type of institution would do, and maybe we would be able to have strong results on the ACT. But that was not the case.

Khari Shabazz:

Is there a number attached to it?

Aaron Bothner:

I don't know off the top of my head, Kurt. It was literally the correlation number to the 838, I believe. It was like, literally if you look at the correlation for ACT, it's right around there.

Kurt Davidson:

Yeah. We had very, very few students above the teens in ACT.

Aaron Bothner:

One student with a 30, I believe. Right?

Kurt Davidson:

24.

Aaron Bothner:

24? Was that peak? Oh. My fault. I misread the ...

Kurt Davidson:

No, I had a story with Malik where my first time I took the ACGT was a 24, but I did the second time get up to 30. So that's where that's coming from. I have hope for that student as well, but not to put my business out there. But anyway, from a while ago. But anyway, so obviously, needless to say with that, we're spending a lot of ... The effort for summer is really, for high school, is going beyond the traditional we're going to do, oh, we're going to do these classes or this, this, blah. It's really focused on intensive ACT and SAT.

Kurt Davidson:

I've been engaging over the past week or so with high quality vendors, and where I think we're getting pretty close to being able to engage in a partnership with Princeton Review, who is among the best reviewing ones, to have a couple of cohort of our students to do a hybrid plan where they come in and provide intensive supports on SAT while our teachers or folks that we bring in and hire for summer do a lot of the additional work in addition to that.

Kurt Davidson:

Then also working with separate partners around a less intensive for ACT, but working on that. And then also an algebra really foundations of high school math with algebra. Not the algebra course, but the math behind the algebra, and providing a summer enrichment program with some external partners, recognizing that there is a capacity gap currently within the high school, as we're working to bring in some stronger folks there.

Kurt Davidson:

I see Jessica has her hand raised. So I'll pause here. I'll pause here. So this is all the bad news. The only thing remains is good news. So we'll pause for any questions here.

Jessica Boulet:

Thanks, Kurt. Yeah. No, I was just curious, in terms of student and family reactions, how they took the news about their tests and how they're approaching the summer opportunity to catch up on that.

Kurt Davidson:

Yeah, that's an amazing question. So as of right now, there have been some translating and true understanding as to what the numbers mean from both high school staff and high school scholars. There is some gaps for us to fill. So I have a PD session plan next week that I'm going to lead with the staff where we're going to go through and we're going to do a data analysis of SAT and ACT side by side. And

it's an hour and a half PD that I've been working on, and we're going to be doing analysis side by side, and then obviously the analysis of average acceptances at different types of universities to develop the staff.

Kurt Davidson:

And then we're going to do a modeling activity and exercise where I'm going to role play with another leader, our director of scholar services, Ms. [Hora 01:09:11], to ... We're going to do a role play where we're doing an interview slash results meeting with students one-on-one, and then the teachers will have opportunities to role play that. And then we're going to turn that around and they're going to do that with all of our juniors and sophomores in the following week as well. Because that is something that we have noted as a major concern, and we want to make sure we're doing it right. And I think may have underestimated the learning curve that's needed among the adults in order to communicate that to the staff.

Khari Shabazz:

Hey Kurt, are there any students with high GPAs, like 3.7 and above, 3.5 and above, who tanked the SATs and the ACTs?

Kurt Davidson:

Yes.

PART 2 OF 7 ENDS [01:10:04]

Khari Shabazz:

... who take the SATs and the ACTs.

Kurt Davidson:

Yes there is. And that's something that Malik and I, we've had a few frustrating conversations, not with one another, just about the topic around some of our highest performers when it comes to grading, being in a very low percentile when it comes to nationwide [inaudible 01:10:29] .

Aaron Bothner:

Just to give it the highest performer, if I'm correct, correct me because I went off the cuff last time I was wrong, I believe like one of the top two to three performers in the G class got a 750 on the SAT.

Kurt Davidson:

And the same student was under 15.

Khari Shabazz:

Okay.

Kurt Davidson:

And we're opening a whole other conversation.

Aaron Bothner:

We know exactly what that means and we know exactly.

Khari Shabazz:

I got that part. I guess my second question is Kurt and Malik, as you're taking your teachers through PD and modeling these conversations for them around college acceptance and I guess the whole process, have any of your teachers taking an ACT or SAT test? Have they actually sat down for an AP exam as well? Do you know where they are in terms of their abilities in that regard from top to bottom?

Aaron Bothner:

No. We're in the process, that's always something that we have on the PD front. That's part of the process of turn around in high school, which is a major portion of it. And so it's a extreme design failure. It's an execution of a poor design failure, and it's most likely a lack of skill and talent to inability to actually teach the subject areas. So, I'm not saying this to be [inaudible 01:12:18] , I'm just trying to give an honest feel of where it is and saying, "We know where it's at. It's a place where it's a total overhaul construct." There still, it's a concept, but I think that they're realizing that there's no reason for that resistance because I'm going to still say the same things. And so I feel that we have people that are getting off the bus at [inaudible 01:12:47] line with that until we have that happening and we're going to have that turnover. It's going to be positive and we're going to get skilled up and do it well.

Kurt Davidson:

I viewed it as both short-term and long-term views. Short-term, there's a reason why for summer, we're looking at so many external partners to come in with the high school, because there is, for our current juniors, we need to make sure we are serving and we are providing them what they need and deserve before taking that next assessment in August and then October as well. And there is a long runway, it takes a runway to get folks to where Malik is just describing. So definite strong awareness as to where we are. And I think those who are not necessarily aware, I think when Melissa gets to her section around our offer letters, we might see some correlations there. So, all right, any other questions before I talk about some of the fun stuff?

Kurt Davidson:

Okay, all right. So we'll start off with the resumes that we have. I have, Melissa is it three, correct? Okay. So we have two Teach for America resumes, two really amazing candidates. Yesterday I had an opportunity to meet with them along with a couple of our teachers that they'll likely be working with next year in either a co-teaching or mentorship role. So we have Sam and Sam, Samuel and Samantha, and both first years coming in for Teach for America. Really, really a great job and bring a well-rounded experience into our school community when it comes to just really bringing in different types of diversity that our school hasn't seen in some time across the board. So we are really excited for that. And then they both culturally, they had other offers and they chose our offer, which was something that was really, that's always good to hear when candidates at TFA have multiple offers. That means, okay, we're not crazy on this and our judgment is there, at least one other school thought they're strong.

Kurt Davidson:

So Samuel, or I guess we're looking at Samantha right now. Samantha we're targeting and go into second grade, being partnered with one of our veteran teachers, Mrs. Kesada. With second grade, she

has done a lot of work more part-time work and had a really nice background in her university and just in speaking around her experience at Newpaltz and really impressed with her just compassion with students.

Kurt Davidson:

And then we have Samuel Ree coming from Philly, and he will be likely in sixth or seventh grade ELA with Ms. Conte, who this year has been partnered with an NYU intern. Has had amazing results. And he really brings a well-rounded experience. Will be leading a break dancing club for us, which will be really fun, something we've not had before. And really has that strong empathy and work ethic that we're really looking for with our students there.

Kurt Davidson:

And then the last one is an NYU resume, someone who we interviewed a while ago, but just have been able to bring on board. She will be joining us and has a little bit of experience as well, but we'll be within the NYU program. And I think this year we've had a lot of great success with our two current residents. They're about to graduate. They already had their formal graduation. They're just finishing their final projects and it will be conferred in the coming couple of weeks. But we've had a lot of, among our two strongest staff members within our NYU staff members this year, so we're really excited to continue that partnership. And this is Ms. Kim. So those are three resumes for consideration this evening.

Anuj Khatiwada:

I'm only approving if I can come and learn how to break dance, just going to be honest.

Kurt Davidson:

Yes, you and Malik will take the class.

Aaron Bothner:

So par for the course, so par for the course with the hat backwards, the audacity of the hat backwards.

Anuj Khatiwada:

You got to bring your whole self, Malik. I bring my whole self.

Aaron Bothner:

Agreed, agreed, agreed.

Aaron Bothner:

I think we can run through that vote now. So I'll do a two-part vote. One to do them unanimous unanimously. And then two to do the actual vote. And to be clear for the recorded record here, that does not include Anuj.

Aaron Bothner:

Should be there.

Aaron Bothner:

Motion to a vote on all three resumes. Do I have a second?

Elen Chen:

I'll second that, Aaron and I'm an aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Thank you, Elen. I'm an aye as well. Jessica?

Jessica Boulet:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Anuj?

Anuj Khatiwada:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Constance?

Constance Barnes:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Elen?

Elen Chen:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

I got you already. The screen moved around and I got the placement issue. Shanta?

Shanta Pressley:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

And Aluta?

This transcript was exported on Jun 14, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye. Can you hear me?

Aaron Bothner:

Yep, all good. And Khari, I think I jumped over you by accident.

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Did I miss anybody? Great. Any opposition? Any abstention? And now motion to approve the resumes. I am an aye for the record. Do I have a second?

Jessica Boulet:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Thank you. Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Let's see. Where did? Constance?

Constance Barnes:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Elen?

Elen Chen:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Anuj?

Anuj Khatiwada:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Shanta?

Shanta Pressley:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

And did I? My screen actually does keep reshuffling here. So did I miss anybody? Okay, great. Any abstentions? Any objections? Great. Thanks. Thanks, Kurt. And I think you have a couple other things as well.

Kurt Davidson:

Yeah, and so the last one is the most fun. I'm very excited to share updates on our graduations coming up. So it is plural. I think one of the biggest things that make us excited is we're able to do it in-person for our kindergarten, eighth grade, and our high school seniors. So in the chat, there is a link to a spreadsheet for you to take a look at and sign up. I am asking if folks could take a look at in the next week and look at your availability and sign up. There are multiple placements in there for all three different ones. Kindergarten one's always very cute. I will play a plug for kindergarten. It's always among my favorites. But if you are interested in joining, we'd love to have you there, particularly with the first, we're saying first and only metropolitan graduating class, senior class. It's a little bit of shady marketing there, but we want to make sure that we are giving them love because we know our seniors have had a very tough year, our eighth graders as well, not being able to have a prom and not being able to do a lot of things that were really aspirational. But we really would love to have a strong board presence, particularly within our 12th graders and if possible, our eighth graders there as well.

Kurt Davidson:

We have a pretty, pretty solid program together. We've secured Icon Stadium, which is the stadium that's on Randall's Island, a very nice outdoor venue as well. We are keeping our numbers under 200, so there is going to be a lot of open space as well and which does mean if you sign up, we're asking for a commitment there because we would love to have as many, if not all of you join us for the senior graduation. But if for some reason you're not able to, we'd love to be able to distribute those tickets further because there is a finite amount for health and safety reasons, obviously.

Kurt Davidson:

So we do have our high school seniors on Tuesday, June 22nd, our eighth graders on Friday, June 11th, a little earlier, and then kindergarten on Thursday, June 24th. Unfortunately they are all mid day for scheduling. That does make things a little more challenging there, but we're in Yankee's territory so we have to be very creative. And there's a lot of competition this year for space as well, obviously outdoors. So we'd love to have you there. It's in the chat. If you'd like to sign up, I'll be sending follow-up emails slash harassments next week, just friendly reminders. Sign up to one or all. We'd love to have you there. I heard Aaron is giving a very long inspirational speech to everyone if you want to hear that.

Aaron Bothner:

I think you had everybody until that moment, Kurt.

Kurt Davidson:

And this for real isn't for me now, I promise.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Quick question for you, Kurt. So if we're capped at 200, I remember everybody wanting to come to my graduation and them being excited about it. So I feel kind of guilty taking the spot of a family member and/or whomever. So should I one, wait to sign up because I don't want to take that away from a family member?

Kurt Davidson:

No, so honestly what's easiest, we are currently limiting. So we have 50 ish graduates for each section. With them plus two family members that gets us up to 150. We obviously have to have our staff there and board there. For equity purposes, it's hard for us to say, "Hey, some of you get a third ticket and some of you don't." So our goal is, we don't want any unfilled seats, but just mathematically, it is challenging there. So we have enough seats to allocate for the entire board for any of them. However, there could be something where we're like, "Oh, maybe if we have space at the end and there's staff members or board members who can't make it, maybe we'll give the valedictorian a couple extra tickets," type of thing there. But ultimately we don't just capacity wise, we're trying to keep at that 200 number to not make it a vaccination required event and things like that, being that Melissa would have a panic attack with the logistics around that, where the health screener is going to be enough for everybody. So, yeah.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Cool.

Aaron Bothner:

Great. So very much encourage everyone to attend. I'm going to put in my time off tomorrow. For everyone who can make that happen, this is going to be a big event. It probably is likely to be the first time that we will all see each other for the first time in months. Kurt, thanks for running us through everything there and turning it over I think to Melissa.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Actually real quick before we do that, I know Kurt's going to send emails, but I also want to put the peer pressure on the board. Again, I think it's important for us to be present at these things. So you might be getting calls, emails from me to sign up. So just, I know [inaudible 01:26:11] to figured that out.

Aaron Bothner:

And to add on to Anuj, anyone that signs up, I'm going to send a smiley emoji. I never send emojis, so go with that. See, it's all about the carrot, dude. It's all about the carrot.

Anuj Khatiwada:

You're nurture, I guess I'm nature.

Aaron Bothner:

That's a rabbit hole we don't want to go down. Melissa, where'd you? Oh, there you are.

Melissa Alston:

So I will go right into it. This is the operations update from me. We have completed the out of certification report. This is a report to the spate reporting the first process that I put it last time was who all is working at the school and what are they teaching. After that, we get the out of certification report, so that has been completed. Going ahead, we continue to report attendance. Attendance used to be reported to the city in the city system. And it now has a completely different process now that we are remote. So we continue. You'll see that as well next month. Also ramping up the CRDC, we are working on that paper-wise. The portal is not open yet, but they were nice enough knowing that the requirements are a heavy lift, they have provided the PDF version. So we were able to print that and distribute that out so that we could at least have it written. So when the portal does open up, it will be very easy to import the data.

Melissa Alston:

In regards to applications, this says, Kisha may report a little bit different numbers because she reports exactly from today the update, and we did this a few days ago. But what's important about here is that we are about 50% enrolled already for the 67 open seats that we have for next school year. In regards to academic operations, we have a lot of ongoing projects. But one new project that we're putting a lot of time into is regents planning and support for the high school and eighth graders for next month. And then I will skip down so Kisha can go after me.

Melissa Alston:

In regards to me personally, I've been working on policy drafts and I've also been working on offer letters. We have already executed almost all of the offer letters and we've built out the position descriptions, so that was something I was working on for a few months. So that has not been completed. In regards to talent acquisition, we still have two current openings. Those openings were our SPED and ELL, and we just have not found the right candidate. And then nine future openings that we are currently hiring for and sourcing for right now.

Melissa Alston:

In regards to COVID, we tested twice this month. We don't have to test, but out of an abundance of caution and ensuring that we are doing more than what's recommended, we test in the building, that's

scholars and staff. So we tested 112 staff and scholars and we had a hundred percent negative tests yet again. Additionally, to look ahead, next month we will be approving the policies and those will be for Nuasin. Some of them are a revision of what we already had and others are new policies that we're looking to present to the board. Some are in the loss and transformation. My team and I are working extensively with this. So this is the process that we'll go over with the capital expense in the finance section.

Melissa Alston:

But with the transformation and regular maintenance of the school, like stripping and waxing the floor and making sure that the school looks beautiful, there's a lot of vendors that will be in the building in the summer, and all these vendors will have to work well together and at some point in the same space together, doing different things. So just making sure that we have a really good plan around that and that we're being transparent with vendors, making sure that they understand that. And then for June, I will be providing you my recommendations as some of these vendors are going through the RFP process or have already, and I will be providing my recommendation for those with a breakdown.

Melissa Alston:

We continue to do data migration work on the new website and PowerSchool transition. So those are all things working in the background with LHA and our technology company, CTS. Additionally, I just kind of pushed CTS again, as I know that the transition of the board during this process is essential for it to make sure that it makes sense. So I have the CTS project manager who was the person that the senior leadership talks to. He's going to be the exact point person for anyone that has questions on the board for transition purposes, email, one log-in, forward on track, et cetera. He's going to be the point person directly, and we'll have a flyer, one pager with instructions on what all needs to happen. And he promised he would have that by the next board meeting, so that should align nicely where there's still a few days before the transition occurs in order to just look that over and make sure that we're prepared.

Melissa Alston:

And then the ones for this month continue to be COVID safety and COVID response. And you all approving the 80% portion of the budget allowed us to deliver offer letters earlier than we have in the past, so that is also a win.

Melissa Alston:

Next thing are just some, don't forgets. So we have the graduations and which Kurt displayed, and then also on June 19th, it's a Saturday, we are looking to have our board retreat. So it's going to be in Midtown. Hopefully that helps with everyone because we really like to see everyone in person and that's kind of like a central location, easy to get to. So that's going to be from 10 to 5 on Saturday, June 19th. And I'm going to send a survey around to RSVP. We will have a virtual option, but we highly recommend that you come. It's going to be very, very innovative, very fun. It'll be a really good time while we do really important work. So we're hoping for that. And you'll have that in your inbox by tomorrow.

Melissa Alston:

Next thing is, I just wanted to give a little bit of a preview of some of the big projects that we're working on. I know I just keep saying, "We're working on these. We're working on these. That thing, yep, working on that too." So just wanted to give you a little bit of an update. So something that's really important to

me now that I have transitioned into a different role is making sure that we're marketing the school and all of the great things that we're able to do for the staff. In the past, all the information was provided, but it wasn't provided. It was just like, "Hey, here's what you can get and take this packet with you."

Melissa Alston:

So this is a preview of what our new onboarding packet is going to look like. It's inclusive of all of the extra things we offer like pet insurance and auto insurance, home insurance, and highlighting those things and really marketing us as a school. It also has items. It has pictures of the staff in here, which are really important when you're new to the building and you're bombarded with everyone and you don't know even simple things like where do you get keys from? Where do you get your technology from? You can see the pictures of the people and it tells you who to go to for what, which I think is really important. And then obviously we'll have other stuff like what coverages you can get, what benefits there are and what companies we have because we have multiple companies for each benefit, dental, vision. So you can pick your preference there. So we have 14 options, which are more options than we've ever had in the past. And I think this is really going to be something that's clean, simple, and fun. You're going to want to read it because it's visually appealing. And also it's really making sure that we're stating it in a way that really markets the school versus, here's this information and it's dry and it's a big packet of stuff and not all inclusive of everything that you need as a new staff member.

Melissa Alston:

Additionally, Latoya is heading up the Scholar Family Handbook. We are doing an overhaul. So these are just some of them. I won't read them, but these are just some of the high-level changes and the high level additions. So some things we're making better and aligning more to our focuses of our three pillars. And then other things we're just completely adding because it was a deficit in the previous handbook. Same thing for the personnel handbook. I've been working on this one and these are some high level changes and again, additions that were not previously in the handbook that we are going to include in that handbook now.

Melissa Alston:

Lastly, who is coming to Nuasin? So this is just a brief overview of where we stand with offer letters. So we did not extend two offers. And then in regards to offers that we're evaluating right now, these are offers that I'm happy to discuss offline, but these align with what Mr. Davidson already alluded to in regards to some of those scores that we were discussing before and the concerns that we had there. Offers extended and not accepted, there's one. This person is relocating to a completely different state across the US. And then one of the offers extended were 61. Obviously we have most people were provided an offer and accepted. And then these pending ones are just those that are a little bit harder to reach because they're not in person. Either they're on leave or they're remote. So those are ones we anticipate to go into that offers extended and accepted list, but they're just ones that they're just lingering and we're just needing to provide them the offer letter.

Melissa Alston:

Kisha, did you want to add anything about enrollment here specifically?

Kisha Perez:

No, our numbers have been pretty steady since April. So we have about 479 for the lower school and 198 for the high school, with a total of 677 as a whole. The data for enrollment is the same as last

month, but this month we have been working really hard on getting our intent to return forms, where we ask our scholars if they'll be returning and also enrolling our new scholars with a main focus of kindergarten, which was our biggest class. Had the most open seats. That's pretty much for enrollment this month.

Kisha Perez:

As of today, we have 1,700 kids on the wait list, which is really good for right now. And then these are the total of applications as of May 10th. If you see at the top, when we worked on it, we have 1015 for the lower school and 643 for the high school. And these are our numbers for SPED applications, which you can see here for 149 for the K through eight and 111 for the 9th and 12th grade. That's the new, the biggest updates I have on enrollment and re-enrollment.

Kisha Perez:

For facilities, this month Linda said that, which is good news, they said that they provide the plans and she thinks there'll be approved soon. There is a fee pending, which was for the application. So I sent over our information to Linda which hopefully this speeds up the process for the application. And that's pretty much all I have for facilities. And then obviously the rooftop, once we finally get that application, we can start working on the rooftop. That's all I have for this month.

Kisha Perez:

Any questions?

Aaron Bothner:

Okay, Melissa, Kisha, thank you for getting us through a lot of information there. So folks let's make sure, particularly for board members, all the technology is going to roll in June. And I know Melissa and Kisha and team are paying close attention to that. I think that said, let's just be mindful that there's going to be some inevitable hiccups. So let's make sure that we're testing our technology in advance. Make sure that we're reaching out if we have any issues, which I'm sure some of us will, so that we're set up and ready to go when it comes to what will actually be the July board meeting. But I just want to make sure that nobody gets lost in the shuffle. And so just asking everyone to take a little bit of ownership over that. This is a big transfer of technology, so let's just make sure that we're testing our own capacity on our behalf. Okay, that brings us to the end of the school update portion. So thanks to school leadership for a thorough update on the lay of the land as we head into the final month of this school year.

Aaron Bothner:

I'm going to speed us up as we work through the rest of this. So, Elen, I know we talked about, I think you're set on the education committee updates. Anything that's changed since we talked a couple of days ago?

Elen Chen:

Nope, nothing has changed.

Aaron Bothner:

Great, thank you. Aluta, I know we didn't get a chance to catch up this month, but I think we're going to be talking about some of the fundraising pieces, the budget update. Do you have anything else that you want to add at the moment?

Aluta Khanyile:

[inaudible 01:41:12] . Do I have anything else to add or budget update? I'm lost?

Aaron Bothner:

Yeah, I just said, do you have anything else to add outside of the fundraising conversation that Malik mentioned we're going to be having in the budget section.

Aluta Khanyile:

No, not at this time.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay, great. So that brings us then to the budget section, how well timed. Shanta, floor is yours.

Shanta Pressley:

Good evening, all. Thank you, Melissa, because you know I need it. Thank you. So just quickly, general update. The PPP update for the sector, thank you. Bob has successfully submitted the application for forgiveness through Chase. So it was submitted as of yesterday, I believe. What's today? Thursday? Maybe Tuesday, it was submitted. So now we're just waiting on a response which could take anywhere from five days to several weeks. So just keep our fingers crossed on that. And I believe that's it for general updates.

Shanta Pressley:

The next section is grant resolution. So what this is, is the board allowing Melissa as the managing director of operations to sign various documents on our behalf related to grants and fundings, just to keep the process moving so it doesn't have to bounce from email to email or through the mail. So obviously the documents that she's signed would be reviewed and approved by us first and with fourth sectors, our review and approval as well and the finance committee or the board. So with the document, Erin would with sign and we will place it in our records and it will go into effect immediately. Any questions on that? No questions. All right. So if no questions, I would like to go ahead and do the motion.

Shanta Pressley:

I moved to accept the grant resolution, allow Melissa to sign grant documents on behalf of the board of trustees.

Elen Chen:

I will second that and I am an aye. It's Elen.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you, Elen. I'm just going to go across my screen. Aaron?

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Aaron Bothner:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Jesse?

Jessica Boulet:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Constance?

Constance Barnes:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Anuj?

Anuj Khatiwada:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Awesome, thank you all. So Aaron, we will get that to you to sign and it will be placed in our records. Thank you, Melissa, for accepting that responsibility.

Shanta Pressley:

Next on the agenda, I can't see, I believe it's the April financials and I will turn that over to Eugene to give us.

Robert Keogh:

I actually gave you Jane the weekend off, so I will be presenting the financials in his stead. April's just one of those months where there's not a lot of movement. Our final enrollment count has already been submitted to the DOE for approval and that happened in March. So there's no real material change to enrollment. Our total cash position as of the end of April was 8.6 million almost \$8.7 million of which 70 K's restricted. That is comprised of \$5.2 million from the invest ...

PART 3 OF 7 ENDS [01:45:04]

Robert Keogh:

... comprised of \$5.2 million from the investment accounts as of April 30th. You'll see a tick up on our net assets between March and April so again, just trending in a positive direction and our key financial ratios. The current ratio debt to asset ratio are still super strong. We have 227 days of cash on hand, which was a slight tick downward from March, typically expected. We did receive our final per pupil payments at the beginning of May, so that number will be ticking back up once we present the May financials. Debt service coverage ratio, again is up from the previous month at 3.6, so we look pretty strong there. No change to enrollment as I mentioned and then our year to date surplus is about \$2.5 million, which is very much in line with how we've been running over the past few months. So again, we continue to look very strong. On the dashboard, no real material movements again on our four ratios that we are assessed on by the DOE.

Robert Keogh:

We continue to improve on most of our positions on the current ratio, total margin and debt to asset ratio, since the fiscal year '20 year end and again, the days of cash is pretty cyclical and just as very much in line with our per pupil and our grant receipts every few months. No changes to enrollment or sped enrollment composition as we move down. Melissa, can we go just the bottom of page two really quickly? Again, just highlighted in green is our year to date net surplus of \$2.5 million against a budget, an amended budget of about \$184000. We did discuss with Melissa, there's a pretty sizeable gap on our other than personnel side, just between what we spent year to date and what we actually have budgeted, so she'll be working over the next month of May on making just some key purchases there, again to right size those numbers and that year to date number will close on year end as we accrue for things like summer salaries and things like that.

Robert Keogh:

Moving on to the balance sheets on page three, again not much movement, strong cash figure. We're up about \$1.5 million from where we ended last year and then fixed assets have obviously gone up as we've invested in a lot of things like Chromebooks and technology [inaudible 01:47:44] support, distance learning. The two biggest liabilities on our payroll, on our balance sheet are both the short-term and the long-term portion of the PPP loan. Just a point of clarification from Shanta's notes, so we submitted our forgiveness application to Chase about a week ago. Chase is our primary lender and they underwrote the loan. So Chase has actually approved it internally in about five business days and they forwarded that on to the Small Business Administration who has 90 days to make a determination.

Robert Keogh:

So we've cleared the first hurdle, which is great. The SBA to their credit, what we've seen lately has been a pretty quick decision time, anywhere from probably 10 to 15 business days since they reopened the forgiveness application. So I am hoping that we can have this decided on before the end of the fiscal year. All that being said they do legally have 90 days to make the decision, so a decision might come in July, but I do have my fingers crossed that we'll be able to get rid of these liabilities, strengthen our financial position and recognize the forgiveness as revenue before [inaudible 01:49:04]. Does anybody have any questions on the year to date financials?

Speaker 1:

Any decision factors on the SBA, on that portion, or are you usually are in line with the bank?

Robert Keogh:

We have not seen an instance where the bank has said, "Yes, you're fully approved," and the SBA has said no. We have seen instances where our representative from the SBA has reached out to an organization with maybe just a handful of clarifying questions or an information or data ask, but all that being said, we've had a lot of success with Chase and all of our clients have seen full forgiveness and we're pretty confident with the financial package that we presented on behalf of the school.

Speaker 1:

Thank you.

Robert Keogh:

You are welcome. Shanta, are you ready to move to the fiscal year '22 budget?

Shanta Pressley:

Not yet. I want to go ahead and get the approval for the financials and then we can do the expense and budget to get there. So any questions on the financials of what was presented? Awesome, thank you so much. So I move to accept the April financials as presented.

Elen Chen:

I'll second that and I wanted to-

Anuj Khatiwada:

I beat you Elen, I beat you. I'm going to second that.

Elen Chen:

No, you didn't.

Shanta Pressley:

Thanks Anuj, I'll take yours. So I'm going to go across the board for question. Jessie?

Jessica Boulet:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Elen?

Elen Chen:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Aaron?

Aaron Bothner:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

And Constance.

Constance Barnes:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Awesome, thank you all. And now the next two agenda items are the Capital Expense and the Budget for year 2021-22 and I'm going to group these agenda items together because they run hand-in-hand and I'm going to turn the spotlight over to school leadership in fourth sector and I'll just interject where needed. I do want to note that 80% of our budget has been approved already as Malik stated earlier when we voted on salaries last month, so this is more from an academic and instructional perspective

for the growth of the school. All right, so I'm not sure who's leading this presentation, but I'll turn it over to you guys. Can you hear me?

Aaron Bothner:

Yes I can.

Shanta Pressley:

[crosstalk 01:52:24], okay.

Aaron Bothner:

Yes, so this is a little bit of collaboration that we didn't do exactly. We should have just [inaudible 01:52:33], so I apologize for that. So basically this is a part of the budget, we're going to talk about the capital expenditure that we were discussing before and just talk about one, like the why and like why we're doing it. So all the portions of the capital expenditure that we're talking you've seen inside before or at least the finance committee has, is to make sure that we are staying in line with who we are. We want to represent who we are. There's an opportunity for us to do, to actually make sure that we are consistent throughout everything that we do. And so the first portion of the why, we are next generation. The truth is, although we have a beautiful building and lots of different things in there, some of our technology is dated.

Aaron Bothner:

You can't be next generation, you also can't provide the level of education that we want to without having some of the utilities that we're talking about, namely smart boards and ELMOs. You can't be scholar-centric without having ELMOs to show the work in a productive way that the kids are doing and having to explain what they're doing. The scholar impact for this is, "But they're engaged." This is no longer the age of chalkboards. This is access to larger and bigger things and this is the access to the work that the children are doing this, access to videos and access to sharing work in different ways, in more specific ways and having that impact is a real big deal for our scholars. And if you want to really make it rigorous, anyone that's working education, have scholars teach scholars and to have scholars teach scholars, you need the technology, you need the ability to do that on a day-to-day basis.

Aaron Bothner:

Then from a teacher standpoint, it actually pushes the teachers to be more progressive. It gives them the tools to actually give up some of the control and let scholars talk to scholars. And the idea about this progressive concept and scholar led concept is not something new or something that has happened a long time ago, late 1800s, early 1900s with John Dewey, right? And the idea is that you put the work in the teaching in the scholars' hands. And so to be able to do that, teachers need to be able to give up some of that control while still having the means to facilitate conversations and letting person-to-person communication be what is the thing that actually ignites and continues the education.

Aaron Bothner:

And so the why behind this is not something of, "Hey, I'm just, I'm not going to lie to you. I like it to look good," but it's also giving us the tools to actually make progressive changes, to allow our students, teachers to actually do the cutting edge things that educators have been doing for over a century now

and put education in the hands of our students as well as allow our teachers to guide them in a more effective way.

Aaron Bothner:

So what as we're getting into, and we already talked about this a bit, is we're getting to a smart part, the smart part for people that aren't in education is not a TV set. It allows teachers to access things on the internet, documents that they have on their computer and allows it to be interactive for themselves as well as the students. And so this in combination with the ELMO allows that to happen. And so when I say that this allows teachers and students to have [inaudible 01:56:28] next generation, that's the part, that is what I'm talking about. And the ELMO is not just a red doll from Sesame Street, it's actually a very, very well-named thing, device that allows you to see documents and project them onto a wall, but not in a projections manner, but allows a student to literally sit in front of their work and guide other students through the work that they've done.

Aaron Bothner:

It allows a teacher to guide the students through the work that they're doing as they're like talking through, like "I'm annotating. This is the decision I made," and actually have it be interactive and truly interactive. And so these are not new concepts, but we definitely need to update them and we have not utilized them, which is something that's really important, especially in this context, but we need to have learned a lot from remote learning. There's a digital and virtual aspect to learning that we need to incorporate in what we're doing, especially as we go on to the next generation.

Aaron Bothner:

So in addition to the upgrade to technology, which we've seen in the ELMO upgrade in the previous Board upgrade, I also talked to you from, actually from when I interviewed to now about consistency. About saying the same thing over and over again, how important that is. You don't get a mantra without saying it and applying it to everything we do. And so we have an opportunity here to change the look of our school, to change what we are about and to move to this truly rigorous, to this truly culturally responsive and reflective and this truly community oriented school that focuses on rigor, self-advocacy and community with all these things. And so it's important that we do that in every way possible, which means we need to change the look for our building. We were going through a lot of trouble to make sure that what we say on our webpage, what we say in our PowerPoints, what we say in our teaching style, what we say with the teachers we hire, what we say with our programming, with our curriculum, it's all the same and that needs to match.

Aaron Bothner:

And so that gives us the opportunity to do that with our interior and exterior painting and murals, which is going to be focused on and really pull into this idea that we understand that pupils in this community deserve an excellent school that focus on intellectual engagement. And that is a portion of what we're saying. Additionally, our signage obviously has to change. We are different. I'm not saying that [MetLife 01:59:09] house was a bad place, but it was a different place and we are moving to a different thing. And hopefully during the course of even these short conversations that we've had, you realize that we are different and we want to make sure we're saying we're different. We want to make sure that we're telling the community that we're different and we want to make sure we're telling the teachers and the scholars that we're different. And so we need to do these changes to make sure that happens in going forward.

Aaron Bothner:

And so, I should have had Robin do this slide. So the cost of this is basically \$1.2 million, which is not something that I take lightly. As I said before, there's nothing I would do for the school that I don't think would give us outsized results. And so people that are in the finance world, the ROI on this is going to be great and I am certain of it, from both a branding and enrollment standpoint, as well as an effective earning standpoint. The best organizations, if you look at them, they say the same thing through every aspect of what they do. From the way they look to the way they talk to the way they teach or do their business, we are doing that and we need this to happen for that reason. And so that is why the capital expense portion of it is 1.2 million.

Aaron Bothner:

Additionally, I also want to talk about as we go forward we need to have a true capital raising construct. I believe that some of these expenses, although definitely we can handle on our balance sheet standpoint going forward without it, it's an opportunity for us to get a chance and dip our toe into fundraising. And fundraising and really create our a focal point on fundraising and so there's different ways that you can fundraise. One of the ways I think that is the most effective is around something that's really tangible, you can see the change, they like to be able to see their name on something, they won't see their name on this, but they'll be able to see that. And the update on the [Permethium 02:01:23] boards and the smart boards, that's something that's universally considered not only acceptable, but excellent throughout and needed throughout education.

Aaron Bothner:

And so having that opportunity to make a fundraise and raise a fundraise throughout the end of the year in the summer around Permethium boards is something I think that will be a great opportunity for one, us to lower our capital expenditure, but actually more importantly as an organization to figure out fundraising and to focus on it and to think about it and to think about how we can get better at it. Because as we go to expansion, we're going to need it more and it's things that we can rally people around and rally contributors around. And so it's something important that is a great chance for us to see what it looks like and do it and get this upgrade that we need. And once again, that's my spiel. Does anyone have any questions around both of those before Bob gets into the budget approval? Or you can also save questions for the end of that as well? I'm going to take silence and go with it. So Bob, go ahead and get started.

Robert Keogh:

Sure, thanks Malique. So we did present you some very rough numbers last month through evolving assumptions and offer letters going out and some fortuitous good news. I did just want to prepare a side-by-side snapshot of where we landed and our proposed budget as of this month versus what you all saw last month. So we did present basically a break even budget last month to the tune of a \$31000 net surplus and the numbers as they shook out, after everything was said and done, we're seeing budgeted surpluses for next fiscal year of \$354000, which is \$323000 to the good. On the cashflow side, obviously with you just heard Malik's presentation, our cash outlay is looking to be about \$300000 more than we had originally projected last month. So what changed?

Robert Keogh:

So next slide, Melissa. Key changes, so it's funny that Malik mentioned that the surplus was about, the capital outlay was \$1.2 million, because that is exactly the amount that we received more than we felt

we were going to as it relates to the federal stimulus funding that the school received. So we actually worked softly projecting about \$2.8 million last month. Our final allocations, which are set in stone that we received from Albany was a little bit more than \$4 million, which is amazing. So that money can be allocated over the next two to three years. So we straight-lined the two separate grants and we can discuss that in a bit. On the expense side, this Board approved our salary proposal from last month, so those salaries were locked in. And then we, Melissa, Malik and myself went line-by-line on the recruitment and the professional services side to identify areas where there might be either additional expenses or any areas for savings. So we fine tuned our personnel projections... Sorry, I have an animal on my desk.

Robert Keogh:

And so we revised our other than personnel projections, specifically on recruitment and professional services and then you saw Malik's presentation. We obviously updated our capital expense outlay. So all that being said, we saw \$300000 in movement to the good. On the revenue side, just some high key levers. So the per pupil rate has been set. The charter center has been telling us for months that they projected it at \$16845. The state actually finalized the rate yesterday was \$16844, so one dollar of movement, so we were pretty accurate in our projections there. As we start to discuss out year growth, revenue is being inflated at a conservative estimate of two and a half percent. Outside of last year we've seen per pupil increases of more than 4% year over year for the last four years. We wanted to be conservative on our budget assumptions, on our budgeted enrollment assumptions, so while we've never historically have had issues getting our target enrollment, we did want to assume that we only got 98% of our targets just for the sake of revenue planning this year.

Robert Keogh:

And then here are our key stimulus figures. There's two separate tranches of money. One is the [inaudible 02:06:49] round two, which was the second Trump stimulus. So we received a little bit more than \$1.2 million through that federal allocation and our plan is to recognize 50% of that in fiscal year '22 and '23. The American Rescue Plan, which is a larger bucket of money, is the Biden stimulus funds that were allocated and we're receiving a little bit more than \$2.8 million through that round of federal funding and we're planning on recognizing 33% of that over the next three years. If something comes up or we have an immediate need or if we have some needs that we need to address in fiscal year '23, we can certainly recognize all the revenue then should we need to. So there is some inherent flexibility built into both of those grants.

Robert Keogh:

Detailed revenue assumptions are full enrollment is projected at 676 scholars, which is 52 kids per grade. The split is 468 at the lower school and then 208 at the upper school. Again, budgeted at 90, assuming we get 98% of these figures and then [inaudible 02:08:03] years we assume we backfill all grades to this capacity. As far as projecting our special education enrollments, we took exactly how the school demographics broke out this year and are using the same assumptions. So there might be room for some growth when kids are back in person, getting some services to maybe bump them up to an additional spend tier. And then on the per pupil side again, the per pupil rate was set and we continue to assume our renaissance for the grades that do qualify. So at your school, that is grades six through 12, all in on federal grants this year. We have \$2.1 million budgeted in federal receipts, 1.5 of that being federal stimulus. And continued receipt of titles, one through four IETA and e-rate on the federal side.

Robert Keogh:

Expense side, obviously you listened to Malik, growth and rebranding and recognizing the new school is obviously paramount to the organization. So being mindful of growth and rebranding, we've added eight positions to the final staffing model to support our growth and then just on the technology and facility side, there's about \$800000 there. And then Malik mentioned also some technology and other areas. Compensation and staffing, we continue to peg to the DOE. So I think we mentioned this at the last meeting. We took a long deep look at the DOE salary schedule and decided to figure it out what we needed to do to be competitive there.

Robert Keogh:

So we did land on that 7% above the DOE schedule, factoring in years of experience and degree type, on average art teachers are receiving a 10% pay increase, which in this market is great. And it being a very competitive year to find qualified, certified instructors. It's sells New Austin for sure. And then just to highlight some of the new positions that have been added and don't necessarily exist this year, just data management, deans of instruction, technology associates on the operations team and then some additional teachers from NYU that will be working at the high school level. The Operations Department again, is historically has just been funded at a percentage of the per pupil revenue that met receives. So no change to how we're funding or the percentage at which we are funding Melissa's department.

Robert Keogh:

So I know the font is a little bit small on this, but this is kind of a waterfall chart just to show you how we're spending our money when compared to this fiscal year. So our projected expenses in fiscal year '21 are the column on the left, which is a little bit more than \$14 million. And then these are just the increases in decreases by our key expense categories just so you can visualize the change in how we're spending our funds to get back to our fiscal year '22 budget. So you will see about \$1.7 million more in compensation. Again, raises new positions and then the benefit loads on those expenses. And then an increase of more than \$200000 in staff development and recruitment. Again, this market is crazy competitive for teachers right now and with a year of remote learning, staff and development is obviously a paramount concern to the organization.

Robert Keogh:

We do have some significant savings, almost \$700000 on the professional services side. That is mainly attributable to you leaving the lighthouse organization and saving yourself significant CMO fee when looking at those kinds of expenses. And then the other bigger, the one last big decrease you can see is operating supplies and equipment. And I don't want you to think that we're spending like markedly less on our kids this year. The reason this number is just a little bit out of flux is because we made such a big investment this year, buying technology and supplies for remote and distance learning that that number was just artificially skewed in fiscal year '21. The rest of the movements, considering you're looking at a \$15 million budget, is pretty nominal and very much in line with how you've spent historically. And then that column on the right, which is in green, is basically our proposed other expenses for the year, which is about \$15.3 million.

Robert Keogh:

Next slide, Melissa. Just a visualization of the enrollment projections. So again, we were super conservative in both our targeted enrollment, which is less than we have this year and our budgeted enrollments. So again, we're targeting 676 kids at total, which is 52 kids per grade, and then budgeting

at 98% of that, which is 662. So again, the school is not historically at issues getting to the numbers, so if anything we'll be able to projected revenue upwards and right size it probably after the first quarter once kids actually come back in the fall.

Robert Keogh:

This is just the staff counts and side-by-side just so you can see that the staff count as it sits now, how we've hired, what we intend to carry for next year and then just the net movements and then basically the cost of the positions. We've had some people leave the organization that were ultimately replaced, but this is the \$580000 that we're looking at net to add those eight positions. That is not a monthly cost, that is the annual cost for the salary [inaudible 02:14:36].

Robert Keogh:

And then just compensation growth drivers. Again, just to provide you some context between what we budgeted and planned to spend in fiscal year '21 and the movement and what's driving the salary increase just because salaries and benefits as you know, are obviously your biggest expense driver. So the \$625000 that you're seeing here is the net cost of all of the raises that returning staff are seeing. It's a big number, but we were light on raises last year. We're doing right by the employees and now we have a salary scale that we will be pegging to for all new hires and returning staff. And then the \$580000 for the new hires that are joining the organization, so that's how we're just growing year over year just on the comp side.

Robert Keogh:

The next slide is honestly just the executive summary. It's a one page snapshot, which I hope is clear. On the top, we again, we just wanted to hammer home our enrollment assumptions for you and this budget as it sits includes about \$15.6 million in revenue against \$15.3 million in expenses, which is good for \$340000 in net income. Excluding depreciation, we're looking at a net income figure of \$630000 and then our projected cashflow summary is below this. We anticipate ending fiscal year '21 with about \$11 million in cash on hand in the bank. And taking everything else into consideration, the capital outlay that Malik discussed earlier are setting aside some money for reserves and just contingency. We do project to end this year with a cash balance of about \$10.2 million.

Robert Keogh:

This, the next slide has the real budget detail, which is and Melissa, maybe you can just zoom in on this a little bit. Again, just wanted to provide side-by-side comparisons for what we have projected this year just so we can explain any movements. So I think the biggest lever obviously on the revenue side is the federal funding, which is related to the surplus. And then on the expense and salary sides, we've talked about the positions that we're adding on the support side. It's not necessarily a decrease in head count, it's just the buckets in which we're considering them albeit instructional or admin and operations. And then again, professional services and operating supplies and equipment are your biggest movers on the operating expense side. Contingency, we continue to endeavor to have 1% of our general fund set aside for contingency.

Robert Keogh:

And then our depreciation costs are obviously going up this year just because of while the capital expenses that Malik talked about, that \$1.2 million figure is literally cash out the door, we effectively amortize that expense through depreciation over five to 10 years based off of the facility. Decrease in

rent assistance, oh so the decrease in rent assistance is it's tied to the enrollment decrease. We get a percentage of money based off of our eligible enrollment and again, just because we've been so conservative in what our target enrollment is and what our budgeted enrollment is, which is about a 20 student Delta from where we're at currently, at the end of the day that ultimately affects the amount of rent assistance that we receive back from the DOE. And then contributions and donations, this is always a sticky point with budgets, especially when they're a little bit tight.

Robert Keogh:

Malik has been formalizing and thinking about a specific what fundraising plan and a goal to set, but when our original budget was only about a \$30000 surplus, a lot of people and organizations and we tried to talk them out of this, try to pad that surplus with what oftentimes is an unrealistic fundraising and development goal. So we did just want to present this to you without any fundraising dollars so this Board knows really, worst case scenario, this \$300000 target or net income figure is really gettable. And any development that we get over the course of the year is really just upside to the organization and we're not dependent on that to break even here.

Aaron Bothner:

Just a quick clarifying question. I'm just trying to square the 111595 reserve number with, on PDF side 11, the-

PART 4 OF 7 ENDS [02:20:04]

Aaron Bothner:

On PF slide 11, the 223,190 in reserve and contingency on the beginning and ending cash balance. Do you want me [crosstalk 02:20:11].

Robert Keogh:

Right. So on the contingency side, we set aside 1% of the general funds for pure contingency, which in our mind is unknown expenses. Right?

Aaron Bothner:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Robert Keogh:

Historically, you've also set aside another 1% for what you call reserves. So that contingency and reserves figure was actually, basically, \$111,000 times two, which would include both the contingency and the reserve outlay. Does that make sense Aaron?

Aaron Bothner:

It does. Yes. Thank you.

Robert Keogh:

Okay, great. I think that is the good news. The budget model that we built also includes some out years as well. So I did just want to present to the board kind of a five-year model from the 10,000 foot view,

just so you can see. And this is going to probably to guide the next five or 10 minutes of conversation with Malik, how things look and the way we're spending money the downstream impacts of that.

Robert Keogh:

So you can see that we do have federal stimulus funds for the next few years, which get us to a surplus posture, but starting in fiscal year 24, and just given where we are on enrollment, the fact that we gave teachers a very sizable bump this year, it does necessitate some strategic planning as it relates to growth and out years and development.

Robert Keogh:

So I just do want to highlight that in fiscal year 24, assuming that our enrollment stays flat, we don't add a kid, and per pupil goes up 2% and our staffing goes up 2.5%. We do start to face a deficit posture status quo as it sits just with standard inflation on the revenue on the expense side.

Robert Keogh:

So I know one of the key strategic goals from Malik has been planning for growth at the elementary, middle, and the high school level. So this was just kind of a natural spot where I think, and Melissa, we can go to the last slide. What we're thinking as far as growth and planning and Malik's organizational priorities and what that means for the organization starting in fiscal, not necessarily fiscal year 22, but fiscal year, 23 and beyond.

Robert Keogh:

You're on mute.

Aaron Bothner:

I said some great stuff you guys missed. I apologize for that. I mean one, really great walking through that, I thought it was really clear and thoughtful. Additionally, just to even get it even more clear, I understand that losing money over a period of time doesn't work and so we understand that.

Aaron Bothner:

The other thing that you've heard me talk about is kind of the vision for the school and the enterprise and the high school in particular. And so part of the idea of the high school to make it feasible to what we want for excellence, it has to grow and it has to expand. Right? And so basically in the plans is getting into space for the high school in particular, allowing that to grow then also growing the existing grades that we have. And so we've run some numbers, which we didn't include as much detail, just to be totally upfront and transparent, really back of the envelope numbers, where we took per pupil numbers of enrollment added in very, just so you know, we've been conservative in this the entire time. Because for me, it's very important that we are very thoughtful about finances.

Aaron Bothner:

And if you want to get into a risky financial game, you do not get into education or municipal bonds, either one, right? And so we are taking high levels of what we are assuming for rent costs. We're being very thoughtful about staff and also per pupil numbers and things of that nature. And so we thought about what it looks like if we grow the school.

Aaron Bothner:

And growing the school, thinking about it from a kind of the long-term, at the end of it, K-5 being a three cohort school, and then 6-12, being a four cohort school. The plan for growth is conservative, expand K-2, kind of the first year of the build-out right. And that could be 2023, it could be 2024. And then looking at that, that would be 70 per grade and then expand sixth and then ninth grade, because those are entry points to have those being four cohort schools.

Aaron Bothner:

And then a million dollars outlaid expansion cost, just so you know, right now, the way the market is, included in rent and in kind of whatever you do, as far as the commitment with the building, a lot of those people, developers, are actually putting out the money for the outlay, but we're putting that in as well. And then we're assuming a 1.5 to a raise of 2.5 million, second facility kind of rental costs.

Aaron Bothner:

And the answer is even with these numbers, we don't go below a \$7.5 million cash portion and we get to a break. We actually don't go below a break even budget if we start it on time. And then there might be one year of non break even, a net profit loss. And so the idea is that, one, it gives us flexibility. If something went wrong, we could obviously change course and think about what we did and we would have to change course, right.

Aaron Bothner:

If we didn't expand, I want to be clear. We would have to change course for a K-12 school in this building. So that's just, I think something that's clear. And, but I believe that we have great opportunity to not do that and have an expansion concept that would be fiscally responsible. And I don't even want to talk about what the outer years look like because there's so many different thoughts in it that we have to do to be thoughtful about it. But this is something we should do. We're poised to do. We have the infrastructure to do, and we have the demand to do. And so the plan that we have is kind of the worst case scenario, which would be actually no scenario, cause we would change course if that was the case and the expansion plan is very positive and fiscally responsible.

Aaron Bothner:

And we'll be thinking about how to invest our money in our students and our community to make the best possible school there is. And so that's kind of what I want to do as the overlay of the expansion and kind of what we're thinking about in that.

Kamaria Brisseau:

Thank you, Malik. I have a question. I just want to make sure I'm understanding this correctly. So I see that you stated that cash will never fall below 7.5 million. Is that in reserves that even when we have an operating deficit, we'll still have reserves of 7.5.

Aaron Bothner:

Yes, exactly. Yes. The cash balance worst case scenario doesn't fall below that.

Kamaria Brisseau:

Great, thank you.

Jessica Boulet:

Can I just ask how that cash reserves kind of, I know it says all financial metrics met, but can you expand a little on like how that compares to what our obligation is?

Aaron Bothner:

Yeah. So we are getting close to those, right? So if you look at the metrics that are on the dashboard, kind of like the debt to asset, the kind of cash for a number of days you can go without. We aren't getting close to any DOE metrics, which by themselves are in themselves, conservative. The truth is, you can look at our balancing now and our metrics now and say in certain ways we're being, because we are not a for-profit organization, we need to be investing that money into education of our children. And so, that's how we actually running at strong metrics in certain ways, which is kind of hard to say.

Aaron Bothner:

But the point being, if our job was to provide a service, we need to, if we're skilled at what we're doing, we should be able to get an ROI, a return on investment on every dollar we spend spending that money. And we just had a conversation about where we are kind of academically, but from a high school standpoint and we clearly have room to improve and we need to invest in that.

Robert Keogh:

And the \$7.5 million is just something in our mind. That's basically like six months of cash on hand for your organization or 180 days, which is a sweet spot. Your organization historically has had 260, 280. And one of the arguments, I think, in the anti-charter school space, as some groups look at the audited financial statements for all of the charter schools in the city, year over year. And they look at organizations like a Success or an Ascend, and they see schools that have \$25 million of cash on their balance sheet.

Robert Keogh:

Again, a lot of it's philanthropy. Success can throw a fundraiser and raise \$15 million in a night, but still it's like if certain public schools are going without some of these funds and traditional public schools saw a cut in funding this year and where charter saw none, because they were protected by state statute. Then, if anything, just carrying a monster cash balance and not reinvesting it into the program adds fuel to the fire for the anti-charter sentiment.

Robert Keogh:

The other financial metrics. Again, we, the school does not have any debt on the school's books. A lot of it lives with the LLC. So financial ratio, even if you ran a deficit one year, it's not the end of the world, just because you have so much money set aside in such a strong equity balance that over a five-year period, when it comes to renewal, the city would be fine because you're making such an investment in your program.

Jessica Boulet:

Thank you both. That's very helpful context.

Robert Keogh:

Sure.

Shanta Pressley:

Any other questions?

Shanta Pressley:

Jessie? Why are you spotlighted on my screen?

Jessica Boulet:

I'm special.

Shanta Pressley:

You are special, Jessie.

Shanta Pressley:

I do want to thank Malik and Bob and Melissa and the entire school leadership for pulling this together. We asked for that build out early this week and the purpose of showing entire board that was just so we can see what the numbers are like ahead of time and see what is actually needed to sustain the changes we are implementing this year. And in my mind, seeing it is believing it. And it gives us a real push as to where we need to be, to keep Nuasin going and growing. So I have a saying, it's like no risk, no reward. So N O risk, N O reward. And then you have to know risk, know reward. K N O W, know risk, know reward.

Shanta Pressley:

So in that, my thought is that we are actually buying into Malik's vision and praying that everything works out in how him and school leadership are developing it and plan to grow this. So we have to either go for it and hope for the best, or we're going to stay stuck.

Shanta Pressley:

I gave them a little run for their money this week with asking questions and they've definitely stepped up to the plate and delivered. So I am all in for it. I talked to Aaron a bit about it. So I think we're good.

Shanta Pressley:

And from representing the finance committee, I can honestly say, I'm good with this. And we look forward to the best next year. No questions, y'all have nothing to say?

Ellen Chen:

Well, this is fantastic. Shanta, thank you so much to Bob, Malik, and the team for putting all this together so quickly.

Ellen Chen:

So with regards to expansion of our school, I know that there's talk about having a subcommittee to kind of oversee purchase of another building. Is that on your radar right now? Or am I a little bit ahead?

Aaron Bothner:

So we haven't really conducted the actual process of how it's going to go. Obviously there'll be board oversight. What that looks like specifically, we haven't discussed. We've done, to get the numbers for rent, and things of that nature. You know, I've already had a chance to look at spaces, already had a conversation with brokers regarding that. And so, obviously this is something that would be a huge deal, to put it plainly, for the organization. And something that would obviously have board governance, what that looks like is something to be determined. And we should work together to think about that, to make sure that we have the flexibility to do what's best, but also, as always, I want the oversight and collaboration of the board.

Aaron Bothner:

Yeah. And I think it's a good question, Ellen. Historically, that governance at the board level has lived in the facilities subcommittee, and that's where that lives until really the June, end of June this year, which is when that will expire. So we'll either reauthorize that at the June meeting or we'll have a governance structure that we think is more likely to meet that.

Aaron Bothner:

I would say June may be a little premature. I think, we have our financial policies and procedures. And so when we get ready to start making real decisions and by real, I mean, decisions that have consequences that can't be easily reversed. The board will have to designate parties or certain parties to oversee it at that point, too.

Ellen Chen:

Okay, great. Thanks.

Aaron Bothner:

I think Aaron just said what I said, but definitely, yeah.

Aaron Bothner:

I was trying to be supportive. This is what I get. I just want to offer my endorsement here, too, because this team has worked, I mean, tremendously to really re-imagine the budget over the past three months and is really tired of the 50 hypotheticals that I keep throwing at them. And I think if anybody has me say rock solid balance sheet, one more time, they might, they'll win their conference call, bingo, we'll put it that way. But overall, I feel very good about the process that we've gone through.

Aaron Bothner:

There's more questions than answers right now, but in terms of the principles we've set out in how we're going to go about this, I feel good about taking a risk here with prudent governance in place to oversee the implementation of it in the years ahead. And I think we need to put our money where our mouth is as an organization in terms of allocating resources when we feel the time is right.

Aaron Bothner:

So I want to thank everybody and let folks know where, where I'm at on that. And we'll go from there.

Jessica Boulet:

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I'll echo that, too. I really, really appreciate the philosophical approach and also this really thorough presentation. It was super helpful. Thank you for all of the work that you've all done.

Shanta Pressley:

Any other questions or comments?

Shanta Pressley:

Awesome. So one last thing to know is that with the capital expenses, given the nature of the expense that will be, there will be an RFP done per our FPP. So we will look to get three bids for each of those items before moving forward. So expect those to be coming back to the board in the next few months as well.

Shanta Pressley:

All right, well, thank you, Ellen. If there are no questions I move to approve and accept the capital expense and budget as presented for the 2021-22 school year.

Aaron Bothner:

Second.

Jessica Boulet:

I will second that.

Shanta Pressley:

I heard Aaron first. Thank you, Aaron.

Shanta Pressley:

[inaudible 02:38:29] I'll start with Jessie.

Jessica Boulet:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Constance?

Constance Barnes:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Khari? Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Yes.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you. Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Ellen?

Ellen Chen:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you all so much. The budget is officially passed. I need a gavel. And I do want to, as I do every month, just publicly thank Fourth Sector for their leadership school leadership, Malik, Melissa, Kurt, Latoya, Kisha. Oh my gosh. She's going to kill me. What's her name?

Jessica Boulet:

Claudia?

Shanta Pressley:

Yes, Claudia. Thank you. Because they definitely do all of the work and I just come in with my questions and they sent me straight. So I really appreciate everything you do. The board appreciate everything that you guys do. So thank you. And I turn it back over to you, Aaron.

Aaron Bothner:

Great. I'm excited about what this means for the school for next year. I can't understate that. Jessica you want to take us through a minutes vote quickly?

Jessica Boulet:

You know that's my favorite part. Okay. So thank you again, Kisha. Well done on the minutes and thank you for your notes on that this month, Aaron, as well. So I move to approve the April board minutes.

Aaron Bothner:

Second, and aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Thanks, Aaron. All right. I seek Kamaria first.

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Thank you, Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Constance?

Constance Barnes:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Shanta?

Shanta Pressley:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Ellen?

Ellen Chen:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

What are you up to Ellen? You look like you're having a really fun time.

Shanta Pressley:

Don't ask. Jessie, do not ask, this is a recorded line.

Jessica Boulet:

I retract my question, your honor.

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Ellen Chen:

It's so hot right now, I'm going a little nuts.

Jessica Boulet:

Let's get Shanta again. It is really hot. All right. I think that's the minutes vote. And let me go back to my agenda here.

Aaron Bothner:

It's just the two calendars to vote on for next year, you can the vote, too.

Jessica Boulet:

All right. Yeah, sure. Just votes to approve. Yeah.

Aaron Bothner:

Yes. Unless Melissa, did you have any, I know we went through most of this last month. Did you have any significant changes you wanted to let the board know about?

Melissa Alston:

Only that we took the suggestion for the October, September timeline from Jessica. So that is just a change from the last time you saw this. Otherwise, no, everything.

Jessica Boulet:

Lovely. So I moved to approve the board meeting calendar for 2021-2022.

Ellen Chen:

I will second that and aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Thanks, Ellen. Okay. Let me run through here. Aaron? Doing great, sweetie.

Aaron Bothner:

Not as fast at the keyboard shortcuts. Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Who do I have next? Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Constance?

Constance Barnes:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Shanta?

Shanta Pressley:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

All right. And then that takes us to the last vote here, which is for the school calendar 2021-2022. And is there anything you wanted to say on this Melissa?

Melissa Alston:

So the DOE has, since the last time we spoke, they have presented their calendar. They are starting very, very late. They're starting September 13th. So we adjusted the calendar from what you would have seen as a draft before so that we can kind of align a little bit more, but we do have 190 days that we have to hit. So we couldn't do a drastic change, but we did push it back a week.

Melissa Alston:

That also was really important for Kurt. Kurt made it a point to make this important. It was because we wanted to give those teachers that did work summer school, at least a full week off as well, in between. So that was another reason why we pushed it, aside from aligning a little bit better with the DOE. There's not significant changes. This is going to look very similar to what we've done in the past. We did though have to go two days longer in June just to ensure that we had the right amount of full PD days for staff and teachers. And so that we had the full 190 days of school.

Melissa Alston:

Now I know why everyone was laughing because I just saw the chat. Embarrassed, much?

Jessica Boulet:

No, embrace it. Embrace it. It's beautiful. Anyways. So thank you, Melissa, or Meyonce. So I will move to approve this. Can I have a second?

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Aaron Bothner:

Second and aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Thank you, Aaron. All right, Ellen?

Ellen Chen:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Shanta?

Shanta Pressley:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye. I was trying to use the keyboard space bar, aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Constance?

Constance Barnes:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

And Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Awesome. All right. Those are the votes. And then let's do a quick preview here. So you see on here that we have a couple of policies coming our way, the grievance policy, the complaint policy for families, the

public comments policy for board meetings, and this isn't on the list, but we are also getting an update to our FOIL policies, which is the law that allows people to request public records.

Jessica Boulet:

So this is honestly just on here because next month is so packed that we wanted to just take a few minutes here instead of adding to next month's agenda. Grievance policy is the one that is going to be reviewed most heavily in the coming weeks by the governance committee and school staff and Susan and everybody who's been working really hard on this, led by Melissa. Thank you.

Jessica Boulet:

And something else I want to call attention to is the public comments policy for board meetings. Because that directly affects all of us. All of these are basically updates to one extent or another. And personally, I thought the updates to the public comments policy were really great, but definitely those will be available for everyone to check out in advance of the June meeting. So please take a look and we're going to probably be passing them as kind of an omnibus as we do all the handbooks that are also going to be approved next month.

Jessica Boulet:

And Melissa, please, or Aaron, please add in anything that I missed or that you'd like to highlight for us.

Melissa Alston:

I have a few high level updates for each one. If you want me to go through those.

Jessica Boulet:

Yes, please.

Melissa Alston:

So for the FOIL policy, we already had a FOIL policy in place, but the policy was inclusive of the public notice and the subject matter list. So we've separated those out into three documents instead of the one full document. It also just makes more sense because it needs to be publicly placed somewhere. It shouldn't be inclusive of everything, internal documents and public documents. So we're fixing that and then the changes are that previously, well currently, the records access officer is Jessica and because the board has a position in appeals of denial of information under the policy, it's important that a member of the board is not the access officer. So we're fixing that and that's going to be me. We're proposing that on the new policy.

Melissa Alston:

We're also changing the name. So it will be a Nuasin policy. And then that's all the notes for that one.

Melissa Alston:

For public comments. Jessica shared with us the board on track version. So we did take some of the wording and overall thoughts around what public comments policy should look like from board on track. We don't have a public comments policy, official one. So this is a new policy. Obviously it will be a Nuasin policy.

Melissa Alston:

And then there's a couple of notes there. If you can just take specific notice to how many comments are, the maximum amount of comments is 10. So we're looking for some feedback on that. Should it be less than 10? More than 10? So what that specifically looks like. And then there is a section in there as well that we would like feedback on in regards to signing up. Who exactly should the public be signing up with? That is a question that we have so we would like to know the board's thoughts on that.

Melissa Alston:

And then if there should be any, as it reads now, the policy says prior notice. So if we want it to spell out what prior notice meant is another note that I have in regards to complaint policy. So previously, this is in the current handbook, the scholar handbook, it's a direct person. You could have a direct person that there's an issue with. You can then escalate it to the principal. Then you escalate it to Lighthouse, then the board, and then the DOE.

Melissa Alston:

So what's new is that this is going to be escalated, well, what the process looks like for the new one is that it's escalated. The process is the principal, the ED, then the board is the appealing body, and then the DOE. But we built that up because we were able to add in the actual ED law and the excerpt of that and then we also added in the very specific instructions on how you can reach the DOE, what's the address. If you're going to mail it, etc. Where we didn't have that in there before. It also outlines the specific issues that you should, if you're experiencing, that you should escalate. That's in there as well and that's new.

Melissa Alston:

In regards to the grievance policy, that's staff facing, and previously you would just escalate to Lighthouse. Now the instructions are in there as well. So just like the complaint policy, we built that up. The instructions are in there, the ED law is in there as well. And it flows from direct person, to supervisor and or principal. Your direct supervisor may not be the principal depending on your position. Then to myself, the executive director, then the board of trustees or a committee that the board chooses, if that's what the board wants. And then that could also be, specifically that escalation to the board can be in an open meeting like this, a committee meeting, or in a letter to the board.

Melissa Alston:

And then just noting that the grievance policy is separate from our policy that we have for anti-harassment and for whistleblower.

Melissa Alston:

So that's the summary of the changes.

Jessica Boulet:

That was a fantastic overview. Thank you so much, Melissa. And I'm sure we will all be, in one way or another, be reminded of these things over the next month in preparation. And I think that closes that out unless anybody else has anything to add under the policy review, or questions.

Jessica Boulet:

All right. And then over to you, Aaron.

Aaron Bothner:

Great. And with the policies, I asked folks last month, and we'll just reiterate here. Let's as board members put an eye towards how these all work together and how we would interact with these in sort of a hypothetical situation where you need them.

Aaron Bothner:

Obviously, we always hope that we don't need them, but good governance suggests that they would absolutely be thoughtfully in place. And so kindly offer your perspectives on that over the next month, so that we get this right out of the gate here.

Aaron Bothner:

The last piece to sort of run through here is just to get us ready in thinking about the final month before our upcoming June annual meeting elections per our bylaws. So just to remind everybody on a few points here. Number one, the June meeting for the bylaws is where we need to vote on and elect on expiring trustees who are interested in staying on, and then any potential new trustees, I think we'll largely be looking at folks whose terms are expiring.

Aaron Bothner:

So Melissa's already included here, as preview, who that is for this coming June. And then, the other things that we do with that meeting are number one, reappoint any sort of standing committees or committees that we would want to keep outside of the standing committees in the bylaws.

Aaron Bothner:

I said that really poorly. We would need to reappoint any committee that is outside the standing committees in the bylaws. And then we will appoint officers and committee chairs where applicable, as well, at that meeting. So our process for our bylaws is that the slate for all of that goes through the nominating committee. And so what I'm asking folks to do is to submit nominations either for themselves or for others in an email to Kamaria. And Kamaria is in the process of working with Melissa and team to set the nominating.

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Aaron Bothner:

Of working with Melissa and team to set the nominating committee for June before the June board meeting. So what we're asking is, and I think I've been asking everyone to think about this for the last couple months, so hopefully you've been able to do that. If folks would, I think, get your expressions of interest over to Kamaria by a week from today, so that's next Thursday, end of day next Thursday, that would be great, so that we can have the nominating committee after that and be ready to have the slate ready for full board review and approval at the June board meeting. Just a reminder for the trustees, we are organized into two... They're called two classes, which is frankly, terrible nomenclature, but the idea being to stagger. We have two year terms to stagger those terms so that we are roughly rolling equally each year. So that's why you have the divide in who rolls this year.

Aaron Bothner:

The caveat to that is, and the reason this isn't always neat, is that when a board member is elected to a position, if there is someone who rolls out of a position midterm, the next board member in rolls into that slot for reasons that are legal that are beyond my understanding. But just this is my annual explanation of how all this works. If you have questions about that, feel free to revisit the bylaws and/or send a note to Jessica and myself and we can get it cleared up. But just to reiterate here, for board members who wish to nominate themselves and/or another board member to a position as a trustee member if they're expiring, and/or to an officer position, and/or to a committee position, please email Kamaria and let her know so she can get the slate ready to go. There's a lot of pieces there. So that's that. Any questions about logistically what I just went through?

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. All right, so big month for June. That brings us to the end of this board meeting. We are going to move into an exact session with the full board and Malik for a brief amount of time here, but otherwise, like I said, I wanted to close out now, after having talked about the main themes of the month, wanted to close out with kind of where we're going from here. So I think I largely just touched on that. But the thing for June is going to be really crystallizing the foundation of governance from the board on down, so that we start next school year really running completely under our new brand, our new org structure, and we dive right into the renewal. So the main things for that are of course, a board elections. They are the key votes on policies that we just went through, the handbooks, et cetera, all the things that are all the bedrock of the governance structures of our organization. That's all coming up in June.

Aaron Bothner:

I know how much everyone loves reading about governance stuff, so can't wait to see everyone's excitement over the next 30 days. But this stuff, as we all know, really, really does matter. Thank you. Thank you for the nonverbal gestures. So let's get this right and close this year out strong and otherwise my best to school leadership and to school-based staff. I hope you have a great last month of the school year in December. And we'll close out on that unless anybody wants to join us after exec session for closing up the meeting. So thanks so much to everybody, and of course, Jessica has-

Jessica Boulet:

Yeah, No, thank you. I am reminded, before everyone leaves of birthdays. Happy May birthday to Curt and Malik. Yay.

Ellen Chen:

Happy birthday, both. Thank you for all your hard work.

Jessica Boulet:

I don't remember if I remembered... I feel like I probably do not remember birthdays last month, but we also had Shanta and Sophia last month. So happy birthday everyone.

Ellen Chen:

We're all just getting wiser day by day.

Aluta Khanyle:

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So Jessica, you just want to forget about me, huh? That's okay. I'm a May birthday, but...

Jessica Boulet:

It's not my fault that if you didn't fill in the sheet. I will fill you in. When is it, Aluta?

Aluta Khanyle:

May 19.

Jessica Boulet:

May 19th. Nice. When was yours, Curt? Malik is the only one who specified the day.

Malik Russell:

Why do we have to be a diva about, this is [crosstalk 03:00:02].

Curt:

I was born on mother's day, May 10th.

Jessica Boulet:

Lovely. Good distribution. And Malik was the seventh. So happy birthday all. I'm sure somebody knows the horoscope of May birthdays, but I'm not that person. [crosstalk 03:00:24].

Aaron Bothner:

All right, I'm going to go ahead and cut the conversation off there.

Jessica Boulet:

Have a good night.

Aaron Bothner:

Just a quick statement for the record, the preview of next month I've got lumped under executive session. There's no discussion of that under executive session. We'll pull that out Kisha, if you wouldn't mind. Just making that its own item. I just want to make sure that we're on record noting that's not part of executive session. And with that saddle motion to move into an executive session here for the purposes of a personnel discussion to discuss school leadership and personnel for the upcoming school year, and extend and invitation to Malik Russell as guess to join the board. If I have a second for that.

Jessica Boulet:

Second, and aye.

Aaron Bothner:

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

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyle:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Constance?

Constance:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Oh boy. Ellen?

Ellen Chen:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Kahari?

Kahari:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

And Shanta?

Shanta Presley:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

The executive session invite should be in board member's inbox. And if you don't have it, shoot Ellen an email and she'll mail it over to you. But let's see it's 9:31. Let's hop in by 9:36 and we'll take it from there. If you're not joining for us and you're not waiting for the goodbye after that, have a fantastic evening and look forward to seeing everybody... I look forward to seeing everybody at graduation, which I believe falls before the June board meeting. Talk to the folks that I'm going to in exec session. Thanks so much. Have a great evening.

Ellen Chen:

Thank you everyone. Bye.

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Aaron Bothner:

(silence). All right. There's a lot of noise outside. All right, folks. Have a great evening. Thanks for a thoughtful conversation. Motion to adjourn the May, 2021, board meeting.

Khari Shabazz:

Second.

Speaker 2:

Aye.

Speaker 3:

Aye.

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Aye. Goodnight.

Speaker 2:

See you all soon.

Speaker 3:

Bye. Bye.

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