

Malik Russell:

(silence)

Malik Russell:

Good evening, everybody. We'll give a minute or two to make sure everybody's on and then we'll get started. Hopefully by that time, those that are on will activate their cameras so we can see them, which would be great. Hi Nora, how are you?

Nora Clancy:

Hello. I'm good. Nice to see everybody.

Aaron:

Malik, I'm just trying to decide which hat I want to put on. Just give me a second.

Malik Russell:

Doesn't matter because it's going to be backwards.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Always going to be backwards you know that.

Malik Russell:

It's always backwards so it doesn't really matter.

Aaron:

I'm going to eat for the first time today. Forgive me for my adventure over here.

Malik Russell:

Well, you'll only need forgiveness if it's something that doesn't look appetizing.

Aaron:

It's its nayyeh. It's delicious.

Malik Russell:

Nayyeh, what is that?

Aaron:

It's a Lebanese fast casual.

Malik Russell:

I didn't know there's a thing as fast casual. Is there a fast formal?

Aaron:

You know what? That's a concept someone should look into that, I think. There's a market opportunity there. Before we start, I just did want to say happy New Year to everybody. It's great to see everybody starting off 2022 strong here and looking forward to our first calendar year board meeting.

Malik Russell:

Let's see. Do you want to reach out to anyone? We have any people that we knew were not going to show up today, Melissa? I'm thinking about Constance, Kamaria, Sophie.

Aaron:

Constance will be on shortly. I believe Sophia could not make it tonight. And otherwise, I think we should have everybody.

Malik Russell:

I don't see... Who am I missing? I'm missing one person. Okay, well let's get started. Alright.

Aaron:

That was Shanta. I'll text Shanta.

Malik Russell:

Okay. Yeah. Shanta and-

Aaron:

Shanta and Kamaria, right?

Malik Russell:

Kamaria. Yeah. And Kamaria.

Aaron:

I thought I saw Kamaria.

Malik Russell:

No. I mean, unless you got like a whole different screen, then you got going on over there.

Aaron:

I don't know what I got going on.

Malik Russell:

You got fast casual. You got all things going on right now.

Malik Russell:

Okay. Aaron, if you can reach out there, that'll be helpful, and we'll get started. I know Anuj is really excited to like for his comeback since he skipped out in his last portion to kick us off. Melissa, can you bring up the agenda for me please?

Malik Russell:

Okay. Let's start with Kisha recording attendance and guests.

Kisha Perez:

Everyone has been recorded here.

Malik Russell:

Sounds good. Also, wanted to just give a big shout out to our guests, Nora Clancy, part of the passive group. Waves and cheers. Crowd goes wild. And then Aaron, if you can call the meeting to order.

Aaron:

Yes. It's 6:38 and I officially called the meeting to order.

Malik Russell:

Okay. And if you want to review the agenda, Aaron, you can.

Aaron:

Yep. Sure. I think more or less customary agenda for us this evening. Starts with our usual cadence under opening items, as well as under school updates. We'll go through executive director, principal and operations updates. Under the finance committee, lots to talk about from this month's productive meeting, I would say, that we had, I guess last week at this point. We'll be going through the usual monthly updates. We do have a budget amendment to discuss. So folks should be prepared to discuss that and vote on that. And then we're also going to get an investment update, which is more or less routine. And then education, we'll go through the usual committee updates. And... Thank you. With public comments happening before the board governance. And then we we have an executive session on the end. Is anything missing from the agenda that anyone would like to see it added at this time? Okay, we are set to go.

Malik Russell:

Appreciate it. And so now we'll switch to opening. I will start with the opening concept is we've added a little bit to it. At first, what I wanted to have, take to 20 seconds to take a look at the mission statement and kind of think about that. And then we're going to have Anuj discuss the third pillar community and talk about how that resonates with him. Let's take the first 20 seconds to just go through the mission and read it. And every time I read it, I think about something different. I think it's very important for us to always root ourselves in that mission. [inaudible 00:13:53] Alright. Thank you. Anuj, if you can read the third pillar community, and then just talk about how it resonates with you, both in this work and personally.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Yep. Yep. Our pillar of community. "Our scholars will embrace community and understand that as a member of a community, you have certain inalienable rights: the right to be seen the right to be heard, the right to be protected and the right to be loved and cherished. Our scholars will also learn of their obligations. As a member of a community, you have the obligation to respect, listen, support, and only want and assume the best in all others. Every member of our community must understand that they are active participants in the Nuasin community, and the community goes as we go".

Anuj Khatiwada:

And my reflection of this, I was going to try to come up with something about our scholars and our teachers and our administration. But I kind of wanted to point it back at myself because that's what I'm good at. What I have not done great is this last part recently. "Every member of our community must understand that they are active participants in the Nuasin community, and the community goes as we go". Life always gets tends to get in the way from time to time. And I have been less active in the Nuasin community than I expect myself to be. And I kind of hold myself to this level of being involved, knowing the things that are going on.

Anuj Khatiwada:

I think when Malik asked me to talk about this, I wanted to turn it back and say like, "Hey, am I actively participating the way that I should be?". And I know that the answer for myself recently has been no. Being able to look at this, being able to see this, I think I have ability to course correct because this is something we expect from everybody within the school community that I'm part of. I just wanted to kind of start us off with that. If there are some things that are in our pillars that we don't see ourselves holding ourselves to, we can change that. And that's kind of the message that I felt like I needed to talk about today.

Malik Russell:

The thanks, Anuj. I appreciate that. And I think that a large portion of this is for us to consistently reflect. And there's a feedback side cycle internally that's self-reflection. And that we reflect, we think about, we change course, we get better. And that is kind of in part of the community. Like we're always going to be missing on certain things on a day to day basis. But the idea is to rather rationalize our distance to embrace and lean in, which I really do appreciate. And I think it's an important question. I really do appreciate you sharing that. Thanks a lot. Appreciate it.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Sure thing.

Malik Russell:

I wish you to said it with your hat forward, but fine. The small things.

Malik Russell:

Okay. I'm now just going to jump into the executive update, and part of that is going to be talking about the next stage of the evaluation portion of it. And so during that portion, Nora's also going to talk a little bit about her role and Dan's role as a consultings role in that. But otherwise, it should be kind of a lot of the stuff that you've normally seen. All right. You can start with the... There.

Malik Russell:

There's a quarterly update, just kind taking a look at where we are from an attendance standpoint, both from a scholar standpoint and from an actual goal standpoint. Just to be honest, this last month for us as I'm sure all of you have known, has been real serious month. From COVID, Omicron kind of really breaking out, figuring out how we're going to deal with this just as a society. I believe has really been a question for us, both from how do we react and support ourselves, to also how we make sure that we are safe and doing the right things, which is actually the foremost of it.

Malik Russell:

And so with that, in K-8, we've actually had a very strong showing. One thing I do want to say, I think some of you know, this. We basically had an outbreak at the school going into break. And as we returned and we made a decision to go remote and the decision to go to remote was based on giving teachers, giving families the opportunity to test and then quarantine to extent understood, and also understand what our protocol was, which I think was an excellent portion for us. And it was a big deal. It also allowed us to see how flexible we could be. We made the decision early enough that we were able to communicate it to all of our constituencies in a proper manner, which I feel people appreciated and have appreciated. Now that we've returned after that first week. Obviously we're still dealing with COVID it's shoes as we go through, but everybody is on the same page. We have a cadence to how we are communicating. I think people understand kind of what we're going through, but also understand that this is all well thought-out process. I just give that some background as some of our attendance numbers, I want to talk about how great they are.

Malik Russell:

Within all of this, our K-8 scholars, we had a goal of 95%. We hit 93% with all this going on, coming back from break and kind of figuring out, we still had 93% attendance, even remote.

Malik Russell:

9-12 scholars, we had a struggle and we've actually made like a real deep dive into our attendance issues. And we've made like lots of big games that will be seen in next month attendance. And so we had actual 78%. Our goal is 95%. I don't need to explain these kind of numbers to anyone. That's obviously a large difference and we are focused on it. I think we've made some changes that we'll be able to see.

Malik Russell:

As also, I always believe that as we can look at scholars, we can look at staff and so our goal is 95%. The actual is 94%, very close. Actually having the teachers and ops be at 95% for the better. We actually had 93% of the Leaders. There was having some more one-off issues and things of that nature.

Malik Russell:

But overall, these attendance numbers look a lot better than they looked at the beginning of the year. And I want to actually put them in the frame of these adult attendance levels of better than beginning of the year during an outbreak pandemic issue when there's a lot more things going on. Just want to put that into that context. Go to the next slide, please.

Malik Russell:

One thing from a data standpoint, as we come back, you guys have seen like kind of all the data in the last meeting that we had, we don't have a new data. One of the things that we are focused on is we closed down a semester and start really looking at this college applications construct and trying to really make sure that it's real and sits with everybody.

Malik Russell:

As of right now, a hundred of our scholars in our senior class have applied to at least six colleges. You guys know this is January. I think we were talking in March and April, we weren't here. And so this is like a big push. We still need to get better at it. I'll be honest with you. We still need to get better because a

lot of them missed some of the earlier deadlines for EDs and things of that nature. But still that way, we're able to hit the SUNY and CUNY rolling applications. We want to get better at this and getting better at this means getting like a year better at it, meaning that we are kind of in this space as juniors, rather even thinking about it as seniors.

Malik Russell:

Our college acceptance, although not huge numbers, we have 12 scholars that have already been accepted into at least one 4-year university. I know there's one scholar that's already been accepted to four, which is great. We are seeing some acceptances roll in, and we appreciate that. The scholars for the senior class have also been offered at this point already 1.6 million in merit based aid, which is appreciated. And right now we currently have a hundred percent of our seniors on track to graduate.

Malik Russell:

That being said, they're on track because we have put in plans to push everyone. And I just want to be honest with that, because we're still utilizing some like credit redemption concepts that we want to get away from as we go further, but we are well ahead. We talked about the fact that we run the college readiness team and they have really been on the ground doing this. We actually have two desks in their office where students that haven't filled out their FAFSA students, that haven't done their applications, we have the students and the parents come in, we have a computer sitting there, they're sitting there as like a place for them to do it. We're really trying to make sure that every single person gets this done. Obviously we want to get this more automated as we go forward, but this is something that we are doing. And I said, I'll be on the front of what we do. We are a college readiness program. And to do that, we have to do these things and we're going to make sure that we always have these numbers in better. Next one.

Malik Russell:

Next, before I go, just to refresh everybody, just because this evaluation largely because of me has been a long process of where we are. I wanted to just one, we have to go through my present priorities, but also just wanted refresh everybody's memory about what the evaluation concept is. Can you bring up the evaluation tool, Melissa? If you look at the valuation tool... Can you get down? Can you show the tabs on the bottom? Okay. There it goes. I just have bad eyesight, great job.

Malik Russell:

Basically I broke it down to these different tabs. And so first was purpose and overview, which we kind of reviewed with you. Then there was a state of school, which was that marvelous piece of paper I sent to you guys about where we were and what we're looking at to get context. And then there's this idea of the school priorities, which is what we're going to talk about today. Kind of my current school priorities. And then excellence as our normal, as our standards, our quantitative goals across academics, instruction, operations, and culture. And then last is its qualities of excellent leadership, which is going to be both a self-assessment, as well as assessment from the board, which is going to be held with and focus on by Nora and her team regarding like how to get that information. Obviously, you guys all have other things going on, not in the school every day. A lot of the things across the rubric, which we've already went through, are things that you might want some guidance on, like how you should be viewing it, how you should be thinking about it. As well as even on my kind of localized priorities, how you should review it and how you should look at it.

Malik Russell:

I'll give Nora an opportunity now to talk through the role that she will play over the next month and through the end of the year, and an ongoing in this evaluation portion.

Nora Clancy:

Thanks Malik.

Nora Clancy:

Malik and I spoke this week about kind of what it might look like to have Dan and I support with the evaluation. I prepared a brief timeline. If I could share my screen, I will share right now. Thank you, Melissa.

Nora Clancy:

Essentially we would be supporting the midyear and the end of year evaluation. And we're thinking we want to have this midyear evaluation kick off right away, or as soon as we can and have it culminate by the end of February. And of course with the midyear evaluation, there's some wiggle room. If folks on the board feel like they need more time or Malik has a week where it's really crazy and needs a bit more time, we can definitely be flexible on the timing, but this is just kind of a sample of how it might look.

Nora Clancy:

We have the priorities that Malik shared and he walk me through them and the evaluation tool that he also just shared. We would have Malik start off by completing a self evaluation. Of course there are some areas where the data is just not in yet. So for the midyear evaluation, it may be the fact that we are looking at a prediction or no data at all. And we're skipping certain categories where there are data points tied to them. Nevertheless, Malik would complete a self evaluation using the evaluation tool.

Nora Clancy:

We would then review the evaluation, check the data points, corroborate them with what we have access to already in the school files and in level two, and ask any questions, provide some feedback and kind of synthesize where we think Malik's self-evaluation is at. We will provide written notes in the document. And then we would present our findings to the governance committee. I believe that's the committee that'll be taking on most of the role here with evaluation.

Nora Clancy:

Thinking about a mid month meeting. Of course we, could adjust that to when the governance committee is already planning to meet and then whatever comes at that meeting would be recorded in the form that we're using. Kind of like a running record where we have everyone's written responses in one document.

Nora Clancy:

And then we would repeat this process sometime in August and September. This is our recommendation. Of course you, could change it. But we recommend waiting until the state test scores come out, because those are just such a huge part of how schools are evaluated and really should be taken into account when completing the head of school or executive director evaluation. My timing here

is sort of loosely assuming that the scores are released early in August, which we have no idea if that is going to happen this year. But in a typical year, it might happen early August.

Nora Clancy:

Because of our position, we're already looking at your scores for your annual report. We would then do all of the data analysis that we would typically do, use that to support in the evaluation where it would make most sense. Again, go through the same process with the governance committee. And at this point it would really be both looking at summative performance, as well as looking at how progress was made between the midterm and the end of year. So if there are certain areas where a lot of growth was made, we would definitely want to be highlighting those.

Nora Clancy:

And the mid-year is really an opportunity for the executive director to get some feedback and alternate perspectives on what maybe needs more focus for the rest of the year. Maybe some strategies for how to go about certain domains in that evaluation and how to really tackle those priorities. And then we would kind of estimate that the final final evaluation would be done by end of September. And again, this kind of-

PART 1 OF 5 ENDS [00:32:04]

Nora Clancy:

- by end of September. And again, this is based on a typical year of State scores coming out. We do have... I mean, as , the score releases have been very unpredictable in the past couple of years with COVID. So there is some room, it's subject to change, I would say. With that, I will throw it back to you Malik, unless any other folks on the board have any comments or thoughts on this timeline?

Aaron:

Thanks Nora and thanks Malik for taking us through that. I just want to give... Take 30 seconds here to make sure all the board members are oriented on the same thing here. So I think just to go back to where we started, we said, "This year is going to be our precedent year in establishing what a relationship between a board and a CEO looks like at an individual school." That is a relatively unique arrangement within the structures of schools in the New York City school system. We were going to set out to do that, right? And we were either going to identify ways that it's been done elsewhere, that we really like, or we were going to hold ourselves to the standard that we, the example, when we get done with this year for a high quality evaluation and reflection process between a board and a CEO, I think a lot of those people probably saw highlighted if you've done the trustee reflection on the year. A lot of the things we're thinking about and talking about here, are all in there.

Aaron:

It's been, I think for me so far, great to see Malik, lead this process in terms of how he thinks all this should come together. When we started really digging into this component of it, of who's going to... How do we arrange the process and the legwork here to make sure this is not only a consistent process from meeting to meeting, but also year over year. I think I've talked a lot about wanting to build institutions and systems that outlast any of us in our respective roles. It started to make increased sense, especially having hearing from [Pasik 00:34:21] and their past... Excuse me. And their experience, made a lot of sense I think to myself and the governance committee, to think about having a third party

do the legwork of the review mostly because one, it is a third party, which is a great outside perspective from the organization.

Aaron:

But two, because there's a lot of technical expertise that goes into contextualizing the data points that we're talking about here, and really doing a thoughtful synthesis of everything that the board needs to evaluate Malik on. In thinking through all that, this method and through, I think various folks research on the governance committee, this method emerged as the best. The gold standard, best process that we would use in order to work our way through this... To work our way through the yearly evaluation cycle and accomplish the standards that we set out and also the process we want to do here. As I think, or as I hope people remember me saying from the beginning here, reviews, if we've all done our jobs right in the standard, I hope we all hold ourselves to, is that if review should not be a surprise to either party, it should be a reflective tool to drive strategic growth for the board and for executive leadership.

Aaron:

How do we do that? How do we set up the structure, the system and the process to make sure it does that and doesn't become something that we all dread? I think that's the standard we've held ourselves to, I think this that's to me, that is the standard that this meets. I do have some thoughts on some of the details, but this is really important. This has been, I said at the beginning of the year, this is my priority of getting this precedent right throughout the year, and we're going to get some things right, something's wrong. We'll reflect at the end of it and make changes for next year. But I just want to offer my perspective and endorsement of it, at this time.

Aaron:

Any questions about anything that I just said, before I have a couple of... One actually, comment Nora for you, on the timeline.

Aaron:

Okay.

Aaron:

Interpret that as we're still all aligned on, on the bigger picture and the contour of what this is going to look like. My only thought Nora, on the end of year is what we've done historically that I think is valuable, is we have done the review minus the test results. Going to back to what I just said, this is supposed to be a reflective process here. I think there's a lot of value in doing that, so that next school year starts right. I think I would like to see, unless others strongly object, I think I would like to see that maybe happen a little bit earlier. So it's a part of the annual planning process, knowing that we may not... The board, I think has to actually formally approve this, that may not happen until September, but that's what I would propose on the timeline. The other comment I had is, I think in our charter, I want to say there are obligations. The board has to formally approve it, things like that. I think it's a midyear and end of year. We just check this whole process against that to make sure we've covered all of our bases, which you probably already thought of.

Nora Clancy:

Yeah, and absolutely we could totally do the bulk of the evaluation minus the scores and align it with if you have a retreat or an annual meeting where it might make sense to approve it. We could absolutely align it with that.

Aaron:

Great. Malik, we can sort through the details of what that will look like. I think that's an easier conversation in concrete form than abstractly here.

Malik Russell:

Yeah. I'm actually in agreement with it. I'm also just in agreement because I think that, test scores are important but I don't want them to make this process different and less intelligible for what we want to use it for. And there's a development tool, I think it's good. At the end of the year, we're going to have a beginning of the year check-in anyway, the test scores will be there at that point and hopefully there's going to be a cycle that's ongoing. I don't think to arbitrarily make the evaluation go on the ends of those things is important. I think everybody knows here, that I think test scores are important. Hopefully that doesn't come dismissive. Appreciate that, it's good.

Malik Russell:

Thank you Nora, I really do appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Nora Clancy:

Of course.

Malik Russell:

As we continue our partnership. I enjoy it.

Nora Clancy:

Yep, absolutely. If that's all for now, I will jump off and I will talk to you all soon.

Malik Russell:

You don't want to hear my spiel again on the whole [inaudible 00:39:38]

Nora Clancy:

Bye.

Malik Russell:

All right, take care.

Malik Russell:

Okay. So now with that, we've went through lots of different portions of this. Now we're going to talk through what my current priorities are. I'm going to start with... I tried to align them with one of our pillars, are the mission itself. Then tell you what the priority is and then the purpose. And then I have some outcomes, that are tied with it. First here, just because the outcomes can start getting a little too detailed and wordy. I want to talk through my thought process and going through it. You should also

notice that I try to do it in the same role that I do the pillars rigorous of advocacy community. This going to be mission statement. But when I started with outcomes and outcomes are obviously a big word and a big priority, but it's a space that I think that given at this point in time, we are as a school, as a country and educationally outcomes are important.

Malik Russell:

We've had basically two years of places where it's been very hard to contextualize, understand, look at, study and think of outcomes as a measuring stick for the work that we're doing. I think it's really important that we set that and we set that in an absolute fashion. The reason why I'm focusing on outcomes, in these data outcomes and how we're doing IAs, how we doing F&P scores, how we do want attendance and how we do on these things, is because I want to set a standard that everyone can look to and know that this is... We know what excellence is and when we are excellent, it looks like this. Not the other way around, having the outcome does not make you excellent. When you are excellent, it looks like this. This is how you should perform.

Malik Russell:

It also allows us to be consistently accountable. Regardless of time and space, we know where we are, there's always a context. I want people to understand when I say outcomes, there are context, but we need to understand the context and then understand where we are performing based on that context. If we know that we need, 90% of our kids to be on reading level and we just went through a pandemic and we are at 50, I understand the 50, but the 50 is still not where we need to be at the 90 always is, right. So you always want to have that accountability, so you can't rationalize our performance despite the context and that feeds into... Absolutes to me are imperative, lots of things happen in the world, but we need to always know that, we know what excellence it's like, and we are always fighting to get there.

Malik Russell:

For me, it's not the point of getting there, but knowing where you need to be at. You won't get there unless, you need to be at, and you're always fighting for that. And you, can't regress to the mean by relativism. And then the reason why this is important to me, is because at the end of the day, our scholars and our families, they're going to live with these outcomes. Whether or not we feel like, "Hey, this is going on, this is going on." They're going to live with the outcomes of whether or not they got into college. They're going to live with the outcome of whether or not they out financial aid for the college they wanted to. They're going to live with the outcome of whether or not we prepared them to succeed in college and succeed in their community and succeed in their lives and succeed in every portion of what they do. It's unfair for us to live in this relative this world, when they're going to live in the real world where these outcomes are going to mean something. That's the first portion and I tie that to rigor.

Malik Russell:

The second one is leader culture and I take that to self advocacy. It's a little bit of a meta concept. I think its self advocacy because up to us to define who we are and that's going to start with our leadership culture. For myself to Kurt, to Melissa, to Keisha, to every single leader in our building, right. It's going to matter, it's going to be us that sets and starts that culture and decides who we are as a place, as an organization, as a school. If we don't live and breathe it, then it's not going to live and breathe throughout the rest of the school. I'm focused on that in ahead, my a priority and want excellence to be our normal, not something that happens on the third, Sunday of a month, not something that happens on Christmas and New Year's day, but something that you walk in, excellence. Everything you do from

the email you send to the feedback that you give to a teacher, to the do now in the middle of a class, excellent sound normal. You have to start that from a leadership culture.

Malik Russell:

Then I say something over and over again. I'm sure Kurt and Melissa will look away, "Be the thermostat, not thermometer." In this time period, especially be the thermostat not thermometer. You set the temperature, you don't reflect the temperature. If there's a bunch of anxiety, which we understand and there's a context for that, we don't reflect that anxiety, we don't buy into it. We think about what's best for our school. What's best for our culture. What's best for our families. We set our thermostat based on that. If we know that there's a tough day coming in, we have to come in with positivity. We have to come in really making sure that we can appreciate every single second that we have with these scholars, it's up to our leaders to do that. You won't have that culture, especially during this time. And I don't know how long this time's going to be, we got to be honest about that. So this setting, the temperature, not reflecting the temperature is really, really important.

Malik Russell:

Then last but not least, I think I've talked about the vision of who we want to be, but for us to transform from the question "Who are we?" To "Who we are," the statement we need our leaders to be on board and really push that concept. So as we move from this question, "Who are we? New Austin?" And go to, "We are New Austin," that conversation, that transformation is going to come from our leadership called.

Malik Russell:

Then lastly, one of the things I talked about in the state of schools, the things I was thinking of, as we do this work, we have to be in the now and be in the present. We have to be looking at the footsteps we are making in the sand and focus on what we're doing every step. But we also need to be looking to the horizon and the horizon is our school design. The school design means that if we are going to do the things that we talk about in the mission, which are lofty, and if you read through it closely, we're saying a lot. What's all a achievable things, we need to be forward looking and thinking about making the school and the structure of the school match our vision and... Meaning that every single thing that we say we are, we are from a curriculum standpoint, from a schedule standpoint, from a staffing standpoint, from how we think about children, to every little corner of our school. The design of the school matches what we say we are.

Malik Russell:

And we have a great opportunity here where we've gotten some leeway. We have some spots to restart and you don't get a second chance at that first opportunity. So let's get it right. And if we are going to be thoughtful about the school design and think whether or not we're going to think about, project based learning, where we go in and we learn through interdisciplinary projects that we do. Are we going to talk about scholar based learning, where the scholars at the center and there's not directive of instruction, but we're doing that. Are we going to think about how we utilize technology in our learning, how much independent learning we do and focus on that? Are what our SEL, our social, emotional learning looks like. These are all things that we are thinking about and want to make sure that we get right and that are aligned with our mission and put ourselves in the best place.

Malik Russell:

And then the last portion of that school design points is that our kids, our school and our community deserve excellence. There are schools out there doing great things with new innovative structures. It's on me, it's on us to make sure that are thinking about the best things for our kids and making sure that we are getting the best structures for them. Those are my three priorities that I'm focused on for this year and what I'm looking at.

Malik Russell:

Then if you go to the next, I tie those to some outcomes and not to, to boring to one of the reason why we couldn't do it on one slides, because there's a lot of boring numbers here. But basically thinking about when I'm looking at outcomes and thinking about those standards, what's our F&P scores? We went from not testing, 95% of us students need to be tested, we need to see 20% growth. And the number of kids that are on grade level, to not on grade level, we're doing guided reading, we're doing ton of things. We need to do that. Our IAS, we need to see double digit growth in ELA and in Math. GPA I need for high school kids, I need 80% of our students with 75% or above. For our state tests, we need double digit growth. For college readiness, we need SAT growth. We need to make sure that our students are participating in the college process, that all of our eligible students are applying. We want 90% of to pass the regions. We want 95% of our students to be accepted into four year schools. From a culture rate, we're looking attendance. From instruction, we got to look at evaluation, implementation, see academic growth from our instruction. See how they grow across our rubric.

Malik Russell:

Look at what our work habits are. Kurt's going to talk later in his academic portion regarding work habits and how we look at that. From operations, we need excellent operations. We need 95% of our projects to be completed on time. We need to be adherent to our annual budget. We need to clearly crush all the DOE standards and metrics. We need to meet our enrollment goal, right. We're trying to think of like all the things and standards that we want to do. This is for this year, right. We might have a different outcome, we might have a different priority or the same priority and our outcomes might be higher. We have a time we need to do more.

Malik Russell:

Next slide.

Malik Russell:

Then for this leader culture portion, we're going to look at the evaluation and growth of our leaders, 80% of the leaders. We're going to look at the PDs and quality and consistency of development opportunities, both internal and external. We're going to look at our retention rate. We're just going to be looking at 80%. And just so you know, someone can say, "Hey, we might have below 80% and that's the right thing to do." But retention rate means something at some point, whether its you, you decide you have to go in a different direction. Then we need to figure out a better way to hire the right people for the right job or a better way to develop them. It doesn't mean that I'm going to hold on people to meet a retention rate, but it means that I'm going to reflect on our retention rate and something that we need to do better, that we're getting the right people in the right positions for excellence. Then also utilize leader and teacher surveys.

Malik Russell:

Next slide please.

Malik Russell:

Then the last is school design and that a lot of it as I'm putting on me specifically, to make sure I'm doing observations, which is really difficult during COVID. Attending outside PDs, I think the quality of our summer professional development will also be a reflection of where we are in school design. I think a strong waitlist with enrollment will also mean, "Hey, have I hit the right design? Is it something that's attractive to people? Do they want to do it? It's something that they want, they think is a value thing for them." And having strong design should also be able to attract talent and the best talent acquisition. Those will all be things that I look at in that, as well as a school design overview for at least K through two and high school, which are the end marks, but also the places that I feel like the most thought needs to be in right away. Those are my three priorities and the outcomes and the purpose behind them.

Malik Russell:

Go, next one.

Malik Russell:

So we've been talking about succession plan and I had a great conversation with Jessica about it. I think we were on bored and we were all in the same space around really the importance of succession plan. Because to me the importance of succession plans, is also importance of development and always making sure we have talent in the building that allows us to like get better as well as expand. We focus on four core elements, making sure that's about development, that we're always forward looking, not looking over what we need, but looking at what we might need tomorrow that we have a culture of people that want to do better and do more and affect more people. Then lastly, that it's always about the mission. It's not about ambition. It's about the mission. That's made a little rhyme there, which is very good. I think that's important for us as well.

Malik Russell:

Then here we said, what we have, what we want and how we get there. We spoke through some of these things and I'll go to the next slide, which is the updated portion of it. Can I say, this is how we get there. We've been doing some work and we're going to share that during the retreat, about different organizations, how to think about it. I think about teaching hospitals, that are both like thoughtful about being excellent at obviously serving patients, but also very thoughtful about the way that we are actually about getting treating and serving our patients, is by creating spaces for our doctors to get better. This is a teaching school and now that teacher school is obviously for the scholars, but also for the staff. As part of that, we are focused on daily growth, every day, every single person to feel like they got better at their job that day. That means that our routines and systems are going to be focused on that.

Malik Russell:

We're going to be very consistent, thoughtful with evaluations and development. We're rolling out evaluation tools that are based in efficacy and mirror some of the things that we talked about with my evaluation tool. People need to grow before the need is present. We're not looking for filling needs when they come up unexpectedly. We're actually having people that we know can be in different spots, proactively. Then consistent conversations, about now and in the future, making sure that we have a tight pulse on our staff and the people that we identify as high talent people. Thinking about, "What do you want to do? How do we get there? Am I putting you positions to do that?" And then we're doing something across, calling Buildings of Capacity, which means that we are in a controlled space, giving people at Bats in high stake situations.

Malik Russell:

So before we're saying, "Oh, we think ready for this job." You're going to have an opportunity to do some work and show you're ready for the job in a control situation, in that way. And so this is not a succession plan in the traditional way, but as I talked to Jessica about, right now we're building. And so trying to say that we have direct succession plans going, is not a spot that we are, but it is something that we are trying to build and we're trying to build it now. And so that's where we are in that space.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Hey Malik, can I ask you a quick question?

Malik Russell:

Sure, of course.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Thinking about number five, At Bats at high stake situations, I'm thinking there's some people that are going to step up and just crush it. And there are some people that probably aren't ready and they're going to get there and they'll fail. Not to say that they may not get it good at it. Do you have a plan for how you're going to nurture them along?

Malik Russell:

Yeah. I mean, I think the high bat at bats and high safe situations, it's a theory that we're pushing to make sure that we know people are there. We're not putting everybody in that situation, but the idea that you would build it and do it controlled. And the idea that we really are looking at the organization is any obstacle, any crisis, anything that we face is the opportunity for us to get better as an organization and also see where people are at. Yeah. And so if we have a space where there's suddenly some issue that we're seeing, whether it's COVID related or something else, that's a chance for us to see where somebody is.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Yeah.

Malik Russell:

And looking at those spaces and that's why I said controlled.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Sure.

Malik Russell:

So you want to be high stakes, so it feels real. But at the end of the day, there's never going to be a space where we're going to put the safety and outcomes of our kids in jeopardy.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Yeah. Yeah.

Malik Russell:

But the idea is that we are looking at those places and spaces to always see where people are at.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Cool. Thanks.

Malik Russell:

Go ahead, next.

Malik Russell:

All right. So in this, we're starting to... One of the things we've been looking at is our midyear evaluations, which is going forward, the king going to be different. It's going to be the beginning year, midyear, end of year evaluation, but we've been talking through some of the tools that we're going to use and think about how we're going to develop and how we're going to set norms on how we develop our staff and our leaders.

Malik Russell:

To the roadmap.

Malik Russell:

So part of that, we start with this nine box concept, the nine box concept to show you-

Malik Russell:

Go ahead.

Malik Russell:

Is anyone aware of the nine box? Has anyone used it here? Aaron you've used it. So basically the nine box is just very elementary, but I think very useful concept of basically you look at every member of your staff across three ratings of performance and three ratings of potential.

Malik Russell:

And so of course, performance is, not doesn't meet, meet and exceed. Across potential, doesn't meet, meet and exceed. And then the idea about potential is you had to talk about it, because it's the softer concept, right. So the performance is one to make sure, you norm across what we think, exceed performance is what you think meets performance is and what you think below performance is. And so then of course, a potential is a mixture of untapped ability, people that are really proactive and show passion, it's to put the other portions in it. So some people look at it as a scale of will, nine box is a potential performance.

Malik Russell:

And so we do that process and think of our team that way and what you see the team. It makes you think about like, okay, what do I need to do to drive these players to move up in a box, whether it's horizontally or vertically. And so potential is not something you're naturally born with, it's something that sometimes you have to engage and invest and you start seeing more of it. And so we started with

that and we've already done that. And then we've also been working on this concept with the upper level leadership, about building capacity, putting people in positions to see what they're doing, getting maximum management capacity and thinking about how are you putting your leaders in ends to not only come up with great ideas, but come up with great solutions and then execute and go all the way through. And then we're going to roll out the evaluations, which is going to be looking at similarly a large rubric, but focusing on three priorities for each teacher, each person that they're working on.

Malik Russell:

And then from that we got to develop development plans. And so that's the evaluation tool that feeds into how we're going to identify push and develop talent. And so here, you'll see some of the ideas are around the teacher evaluations, the rubric is immense. And I should have thought more when I first showed it to leadership team, everybody was really like, "Whoa, this is a whole lot." And so the idea is that we're going to have these evaluations and a lot of this rubric, which is extensive, but, and it centered on these four ideas, but we're going to focus in on three or four things we're trying to do and get done and work with the teachers on. And so this is the sneak peek of that, which is very small. If people want to see it in the longer form we can, but nobody wants to go through this in a long way, I promise you that.

Malik Russell:

So you go ahead.

Malik Russell:

All right. And so that is my update, which was really long. And so I'm hoping everybody else will be short. And wanted to start if there any questions across the myriad of things that we talked about? Thoughts are resonating, concerns, even feelings are allowed at this point? So we're take it and run that it was comprehensive and great, and so perfect. I like that. And so then I will turn it over to the esteemed Mr. Davidson to give his update.

Kurt Davidson:

All right, good evening. Everybody. As Malik mentioned this month is an off month, when it comes to data with the break that we had had over December/January. So what we wanted to do this month is give a sneak peek into a little bit of... a lot of the work that we are doing within math, knowing that that has been on the-

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

Kurt Davidson:

Work that we are doing within math, knowing that that has been on the past IAs, along with other data points, has been our biggest area of growth within the school. We're very confident in the strength that we've been bringing in ELA and reading and the growth as mentioned through a variety of assessments, we're seeing growth in ELA. Our partnership with Lavinia group has been very solid and continues to grow. And we're just seeing a lot of promise there.

Malik Russell:

[Inaudible 01:04:30] Khari Shabazz.

Kurt Davidson:

And we know our area that we have to really focus on, and our area of growth is in math, so we wanted to show some of the work that we're doing this month. So go ahead. I'll go through fairly quickly. We're not doing all 18 slides. I saved that for the ed committee, but you have a chance. I believe Melissa got it all posted for me in there if you want to look at the other slides towards the end that we won't get to today.

Kurt Davidson:

But just want to start framing, and this is something that we've been really revisiting what it looks like to set goals within the staff this year. And our big, big goals are greater than 80% proficiency in all content areas. We're starting off the year in math at 30% proficiency in three through eight. And we know going from 30 to 80 is a lot and would probably cause some outside providers to come in and look at what exactly we're doing. That might be a little fishy, that amount of growth in one year, but we want to set our goals at high levels at all times because we believe our kids can get there. If we don't believe our kids can get there, why are we here? And as mentioned, we are looking for that double digit to 20 point growth throughout the year, but we want to keep our bar at or above 80% at all times because that is where we're setting our standard for ourselves.

Kurt Davidson:

So this slide is to illustrate how we've been approaching more progressive goal setting throughout this school year. What we've been doing has been taking the work that we've been working with the Lavinia group in ELA and reading and translating that to math. And we have these monthly benchmarks that has been transitioning over to the concept of we're looking at student work and really having student work drive the conversation along with the raw results, but really diving deeper into student work. And what I want to share with you all is within these goals, and we dove pretty deep into this within the ed committee, but our goals are progressively increasing over the course of the year.

Kurt Davidson:

So we started off in October and really that annotations is our big priority. We're really having not just accurate but meaningful annotations on the problems that students are facing. And we're looking for that. And we progress that to January so that we're increasing the number of students. We're using our data on a monthly basis, so we have our IAs, we have our quizzes that we give students on a consistent basis that shows where we are and we're readdressing where our goals are for the following month. So our original goal in January was slightly more ambitious than what it was, and we had to reassess and revisit that, but we're still leveling up.

Kurt Davidson:

Where we're layering this on is this "My Math Plan", which you all have seen before, and we'll go into a little more depth in a moment, where part of the math plan is checking their work and solving problems a second way. We are teaching strategies and skills for students to approach problems. We're not teaching how to solve an individual problem. And that's been a mindset shift across the school of mathematics, that we're really trying to dive deep into, and it is a hard shift. As we shared last month around the transition from procedural math to conceptual math, that is a major shift. But also looking beyond just the single problem into the theme of transferability across a variety of concepts.

Kurt Davidson:

So that means how are you using a number line? You're using number line in fractions. You're using a number line in rounding numbers. You're using a number line in positive negative integers. You're using a number line for a variety of uses. And this is a tool. This is a strategy that you can use and support, students can use to show their work in multiple ways. Thanks, Melissa. And as I referenced, we have the My Math Plan here, and this is a big part of our five structures in math that I want to illustrate over the next few slides that we've been really going all in on over the course of the past couple of months to address our performance in mathematics head on.

Kurt Davidson:

So as I've shared over time, intellectual preparation and strong intellectual prep is the basis of everything that we are doing. Kids are not going to learn high levels if the teacher is not intellectually prepared. So every single one of these, while intellectual pressure is directly named in element one here, it is consistently existent throughout every part. Teachers have to prepare for the assessments. They have to prepare, run the data check-ins. They have to prepare for the rotations. And having that strong intellectual prep on the front end helps us be more effective there. And then the second thing is high levels of discussion, which is our second overall priority throughout the year is evident throughout. So let's go and show the first one.

Kurt Davidson:

So I wanted to show a variety of grade levels as to what this actually looks like. So what we are doing as part of our coaching work is we are really focusing on the exemplar work. We're starting with the exit ticket, but we're also looking at the teacher mini-lesson. And when teachers come to coaching sessions with their coach, they're coming with their exemplars created and the coach is coming with her exemplar created, and we're working to identify specific misconceptions for kids that they may have in a lesson. This is really critically important, especially in mathematics because there are so many different things that could be barriers for why kids may not get a concept, and if we identify those or we can predict those in advance, it's really helpful for us to be able to plan for that in advance versus reacting it once we get to the exit ticket.

Kurt Davidson:

So this is an example of I believe his interquartile range lesson in eighth grade, something that I do not love personally because it's a lot. But we're looking at the teacher exemplar and what he is looking for. And he comes to his coaching session with this. I'll be doing this specific work with this second grade teacher tomorrow when we're going into some word problems in double digit addition and using the place value chart to regroup and bundle fives, bundle tens together, transfer them over to the other place value to support. And this is just a huge part of our coaching that hasn't been existent before and has really helpful in like moving the bar upwards for the preparation for teachers.

Kurt Davidson:

The second thing is example from sixth grade and this is the internalization of the My Math Plan, and I just wanted to highlight through this slide along with the next one... It's really distracting. And with the next slide of like how this My Math Plan comes in place. And these are two examples from sixth grade of students who are executing My Math Plan and what this looks like. I showed this last month, but wanted to go in even more detail with this in showing that when we're thinking about annotations, it's not just circling numbers and underlying words, it's truly identifying what the problem is asking and then coming up with a plan to solve the problem.

Kurt Davidson:

So as I mentioned number lines can be used for rounding, can be used for fractions, can be used for just foundational addition and subtraction. We're using this for operation with integers here. And what this student did was created this number line digitally and then physically went from identified that we're starting out at 12 degrees on the positive end, and then we're going, the temperature dropped 20 degrees. We made 20 jumps on the number line by 2 down and we can visually see that the temperature at midnight was negative 8 degrees. And as a check for section 3, the student did the math of negative 8 plus 20 to verify that it started at 12 and confirmed that. And this is the type of work that we're looking for just in ELA. They're annotating the text. They're coming with the main idea. In math, we are annotating the text of the problem. We're coming with a plan, and we're checking our work.

Kurt Davidson:

All right. And then the third thing. This is a major update and this is something that Malik and I have spent a lot of time to talking about. And then we've been working with Miss Whitehead, particularly in fifth and sixth grade, seeing where with our curriculum, with the state, the engaged New York curriculum. There are many places where the curriculum doesn't match the rigor of the state test, and we've realized the importance of us making that change ourself. So this is an example in fifth grade where the curriculum exit ticket has a very simple mixed number operations question for number one and number two, where you're one in three fourths plus one sixth plus blank equals seven and a half. And what we've done is, how this is presented, there may be one or two questions on the state test that's presented in this very straightforward manner.

Kurt Davidson:

However, the majority of questions will be in a word problem. So part of the intellectual preparation of the teacher is Mr. Johnson is working with Miss whitehead to turn these into a story. And you can see this is a modification of a daily exit ticket where we took the curriculum. Then we turn it into a story into something of where they will see. And this is real student work. I don't remember the student's name really. Might have been, might have been Jane. And what Jane did was she annotated the problem, obviously, we got to work on organizing our workspace a little bit. There's a lot going on there. But what she went through, annotating the problem, showing her work, and then she has a check at the bottom, just as well, but this starts off with us revising this exit ticket that is originally in the text that we're able to really move to the rigor there.

Kurt Davidson:

And the fourth example is, and this is as we get into my mastery season, is our daily data check-ins. So this is something that has started over the course of the past two weeks. Third and fourth grade started beforehand, and middle school is starting this week, where at the end of the day, they are on alternating days, so Monday, Wednesday is fourth grade. Tuesday, Thursday is third grade. Miss Culler, coach, is coming in and meeting with the teachers at the end of the day, and they're going through their exit tickets. They're doing a sort. They're looking at the misconceptions, and they're taking that data and acting on it the next day. This is where our groupings come in for students. We're not waiting for an i-Ready Assessment to come through. We're not waiting for the next IA. We're going through data on a daily basis. And we're doing this as a team twice a week, but teachers are continuing to do this on their own on the alternating days, so that they're able to really impact and use this data on a daily basis to really change that.

Kurt Davidson:

And this transitions to what I'll talk about in the next slide, but like our story problems and our really scholar discourse model, where we're starting off the beginning of the day with a discourse. And there are some days where kids completely bomb the exit ticket, so we will scrap our number story or application problem that's provided in the text. We're going to provide an example of student work, and we're going to discourse the heck out of this problem. Give a scholar a chance to share her thinking, give the rest of the class a chance to really probe and learn from that thinking. And we're really excited about the work that we've seen in number stories and discourse over the course of the past few weeks, where particularly in our third through sixth grade we've seen a lot of growth where students are taking on the ownership and the leadership and presenting their work in front the class and workshopping it with the class in order to make it better.

Kurt Davidson:

And that level of discussion in depth of thinking with mathematics is really critical for us to go beyond the traditional approach of the I do, we do, you do, and students are just replicating what teachers are teaching them. This is where we're getting to the deeper meaning. And this is where we're spending a lot of the time to have kids discuss the work that's going on in the classroom.

Kurt Davidson:

And I'll use this as an opportunity to give a pitch of, we'd love, especially as Omicron is settling down, we'd love for, anyone to come on in and visit. Feel free, just let Kisha know. And we'd love to let you see like where this is working, and also where we are working to improve it. Like we know where the numbers are. We know mathematics is our biggest area of growth, particularly in the three through eight.

Kurt Davidson:

And with that, we've really tried to go all in on, you know, setting up like these five systems that fit within our overarching themes of strong intellectual preparation and discourse throughout. And we're starting to see some of the fruits of our labor. I think we're really proud of the work that we've seen, particularly in fifth and sixth grade. We have teachers who have leveled up and improved dramatically over the course of the past year. And these are teachers that we've had for a couple of years on staff. And it's just they're moving to the next level now with this approach in mathematics, and we're really excited for that. We also, it is an approach shift, so we are working on the others that we're still working to move them forward in this approach, but definitely we'd love to have anyone come see and give feedback and love to have you in.

Kurt Davidson:

But that's a little snapshot of what we're doing in math. The remainder of the slides is our approach to mastery or test prep this year. If you all are interested in looking through that, feel free to do so. We went through it in the ed committee call, but wanted to make sure you all had a chance to see how our approach is similar to years past we're taking on a lot of what Malik brought at the end of last year with mastery. And obviously the timeline is much more... We're we're moving ahead on the timeline. So we're starting now as opposed to starting later on in the year. And this is a conversation we were having in March, April of last year. And we are full fledged in launch mode in January. And our approach with teachers is really shifting the concept from this is just about test prep to this is around mastery.

Kurt Davidson:

And as Malik was sharing earlier, it's really one thing that we're really trying to do in.. The analogy that I used with staff a couple of weeks ago was we're looking beyond the ground day Groundhog Day concept of in a school oftentimes it feels like Groundhog Day where every August, all right, it's a new school year. We're going to do all these new things all over again. There's a lot of things that we've been doing. And we've been seeing that in close reading. We're not having to start over from scratch in close reading. We have a lot of intellectual bandwidth that's in place. We have a lot of resources that we've been working hard on over time that we can start launching at the beginning of the year. It's not something that we have to turn it on or reteach completely. So that's where we are. I wanted to give you a little sneak peek into math, and we'll gladly take any questions.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Kurt, not a question, but a comment. Tell Jane I am 30 some odd years old and still haven't figured out how to organize my workspace, so I think she's going to be okay.

Malik Russell:

Just so you know, that goes to low bars. We're at high bars here. So tell Jane she can be better. She can definitely be better. And earlier. So that's good.

Aaron:

Thanks Kurt. I want to just use the time quickly to make a plug. I was talking with Malik about this this week on our check-in. Let's do be sure that we're mindful of and trying to plan our days so that each board member is in the school at some point this year acknowledging everyone's facing difficult and unique circumstances as we navigate the winter months here, winter number two with COVID. I know oftentimes that requires, at least it does for me, months of planning to get days off, to line off, so on and so forth. So, really encourage folks to ensure that they keep that as part of their planning process for the year. Malik, Kurt, Melissa, what should interested board members do in order to get a day organized that works for you all to come in?

Malik Russell:

I think, just from my perspective, I'm a real open door policy person. So like anytime you want to come, just let us know, so we just know that you're coming, and so that you can get past the front desk. That's important. Any day, I think, for your own kind of personal, to make sure it's as beneficial as you want. You just don't want to pick a testing day or a day that something else is going on, so you might want to call in and just ask to make sure that one of those days aren't there because otherwise you'll just have Kurt not talking to you, and kids working on their work.

Malik Russell:

But like literally, for people that have come, I think reach out to them. It's a pretty informal concept. It is a big deal that we move to the space of not only do we have nothing to hide, we want people to come in and we want people to talk about it. And so you basically come in, see it, and just so you know, nobody's going to be more excited when you come in than Kurt. We're proud of what we have here, right? And so like we're going to be here, and we want you to come in, see, sit down, stay as long as you want. Like Khari came and people were trying to get him to stay for like another two days. I guess the overarching concept is it's not inconvenience. It's something that we're proud of and we want you to be there.

Aaron:

Khari said show up cold. I don't know if he means temperature or what.

Khari Shabazz:

No, I just mean go in, just show up gangster, you know? That's what I mean by cold. You just show up, you know? And just shout out to Malik and his team, Kurt, your whole team and everyone. Very, very helpful. Very much would love to show you around, but they also have work to do. And so board members, we're grownups, we can go into classrooms, we can do that on our own, but it's a lovely experience. So thank you very much for that experience. And I'm going to show up again. I may or may not let you know. But it's a great school. Great experience.

Malik Russell:

I just want you not to wear a hoodie next time. All right.

Aaron:

Board members, make sure we get there. Thanks.

Malik Russell:

All right. Sounds good. Thanks a lot, Kurt. Really do appreciate that. I do want to just as a stamp and Kurt already said it, there's lots of concepts around this test prep that we aren't teaching the tests, we're teaching transferable skills and critical thinking in a deliberate way and being thoughtful about it. I think the work that Kurt and team are doing is exemplary, and I'm looking forward to great results. Just so you know the great results aren't the test. The great results are the thing that's going on. Those are going to be measured and seen in these outcomes of the test.

Malik Russell:

All right. So can we get back to the agenda? Okay next we are going to go to the finance committee and so we'll go to Shanta. Oh, are we good? Oh no, my fault. I messed everything up. I apologize. I skipped down because I talked so long. I took up so much time. I'm way off. Sorry, Melissa. So next we'll go to operations update with Melissa and Kisha.

Melissa Alston:

Kisha, can you start us off?

Kisha Perez:

Yes. Good evening, everyone. Happy new year. For this month of January our updates are we're at 485 total for K through 8, and we are at 191 for 9 through 12, making it a total of 676 for our applications for the next school year. We have opened our applications. We have over 300 applications currently. We are working on recruiting right now and working on getting our ad on radio stations and getting our name out there. So those are my updates for this month. Thank you.

Melissa Alston:

Thank you. So an update from the manager of talent acquisition and marketing. We had two resignations this month, and we had two hires. One of those new hires backfilled one of the

resignations. The other one was a leave coverage hire. So one of our social workers is on leave and this is a coverage for that. And we're hoping that this person will slide into a new role with an org chart change for our next school year. The resumes can be found in the document section of Board On Track if you'd like to see those.

Melissa Alston:

Continuing the update here for marketing, the manager of talent acquisition has really been working to get us a graphic that we really like so we can start a billboard by the Jerome train station for mid February. So we're excited about that.

Melissa Alston:

And then we're going to give you a preview here in the next slide to our photographer that came in. We're continuing to acquire more photos. So this is the third time that he's come into the building. So just making sure that we have candid and posed photos and having a ton of them so we're able to put them in different spaces and have them as we continue on our marketing binge here.

Melissa Alston:

Then in regards to talent, we're heavily continuing to work on the program for what talent looked like. I actually said this earlier. I think we underestimated what that looks like. We started with nothing, and we really were working on when we started having talent acquisition as a school-based thing. That was just a year ago, and we were really focused on hiring and getting ourselves staffed. Then when that slowed down a little bit we were focused on marketing. So right now we have a little bit of a lull, and this is why we're using this time to really build out what talent looks like at Nuasin and making sure that we memorialize what those things are, and create a plan to train our leaders on what that is and making sure that everybody's on the same page. So that has really been a bulk of our time there. These are some of our photos from our last photography.

Malik Russell:

This is a time we say, "Ooh. Ah. These are great photos. The kids are so cute."

Anuj Khatiwada:

Ooh. Ah. These are great photos. The kids are so cute.

Malik Russell:

Thank you, Anuj. Greatly appreciate it.

Melissa Alston:

So an update from the manager of academic operations. She continues to work on wellness programs. Actually, today everyone got a Hello Fresh box to their home. So that was a huge win for the staff. So they're able to prepare a couple meals on Nuasin. So just continuing to make sure that we are pushing this and have an incentive and something really nice for the staff every month aside from our other items that we are doing like the comm app and our wellness days. And then ongoing, we have the same ongoing items, special projects reporting and F&P testing support. So this is a big, big, big, big, big, big win for us. We finally have access-

Malik Russell:

Whoa, hold it there. I think, no, we got to build that up more. We got to build that up more. I know like, hey, my drum roll, please. Come on, everybody. Do it. Everybody drum roll. I need it. Come on. The gym is open. It's in the building and usable. Yes. Yes. Turn off your mutes. Get a yes.

Melissa Alston:

Very exciting, guys.

Malik Russell:

Gym is open. Yes. Yes. Let's go. Oh. Go. Whoo.

Anuj Khatiwada:

I saw an Instagram post about the gym, and in the middle of the work day I left my Zoom station that I was at so I could go tell my wife because she's heard me talk about the gym for the last three years. So this is so exciting.

Malik Russell:

Great. Hey, also if you're in the neighborhood. Come by. Get some shots up. We're open. We're ready for use. Anuj, you want to come down and embarrass yourself, let me know. We got space.

Jessica Boulet:

Honestly, it looks really beautiful. Looks great.

Malik Russell:

It is beautiful. That's what made so frustrating.

Aaron:

Kisha, I think we can finally go back to my favorite placeholder on the board agenda.

Kisha Perez:

Absolutely. We have already started talking about it.

Aaron:

I can't wait to hear about it.

Melissa Alston:

So this is just a few pictures of our opening. So the leaders led a surprise opening for the scholars at the school, so this is just a sneak peek of that, and our new mascots that we have is actually one of our college readiness directors. Before we even got the costume he's like that's me. I was born for this job. And he surely lived up to it. As soon as he got in, he was up there and in the gym with the costume.

Melissa Alston:

And then an expansion update here. So we are now have already sent out the RFP at the beginning of this month, and we have our first response. And we're actually going to have a conversation with the locations' owners tomorrow. So we are pushing through here. We're waiting for a few more sites. We're looking at four other ones. So we're just waiting here for that. The RFP deadline has not passed. So we still have time for those. And we anticipate that those responses will come in as per the broker.

Melissa Alston:

So for compliance, we still continue to work on the same reporting we did. Attendance is an ongoing thing because they've changed it through COVID. There's a very different approach to how the city reports our attendance for scholars, but we are fully up to date until the end of December with attendance. It's completely submitted, so we're going to move on to completing January once we are done with the month there.

Melissa Alston:

In regards to COVID, we have some more updates here, a little bit more detail than normal. So there's been a change in our COVID protocol with everyone sees that that return after five days of being positive and not testing, not having a test upon your return, so we are following that protocol and then just layering in other guidance and such, but looking at this like every day, every other day, just to make sure we're on top of things.

Melissa Alston:

We also increased our testing. So it was originally biweekly and not for those that were vaccinated. It is now for anyone who has authorized testing and it is weekly now. So we have completely increased that. We also have home tests on hand, and those are in those instances where we have close contact, we will give the at home test, and we have created a whole protocol in regards to that. So everyone gets instructions when they get the home test, and everyone is able to test and be safe there.

Melissa Alston:

We are working on as well, which we hope gets approved in the amendment that's going to come later, we're hoping to purchase KN95 masks, just to ensure that we are a little bit more safe. These are the ones that are recommended now, which is a change. So we are just looking to be in line with that. And then we did have 15 staff members test positive and 9 scholars test positive since the last time we've met. And some of that has to do with the outbreak that we did have that Malik talked about earlier and then other one-off ones.

Melissa Alston:

In regards to my priorities, they pretty much continue to be the same thing. I tend to work on things that like are really long projects. I promise I am working and doing things. Even though it's like the same slide every-

PART 3 OF 5 ENDS [01:36:04]

Melissa Alston:

I promise I am working and doing things, even though it's the same slide every time, but we just finished our Intent to Return survey. We just got 100% completion as of today. So we will be crunching those

numbers and planning. So we've already had a few org chart meetings, thinking about what we want next year to look like and what we need. So now we're going to tie the Intent to Return surveys to those needs that we have and the needs that we're projecting. So we'll begin to have those conversations now.

Melissa Alston:

And then another huge thing that we're working on is Onboarding 3.0, so I'm just going to show you very quickly. This is a sneak preview of our talent acquisition. So, a lot of times, I think we take, at least I have in the past... Everyone knows I worked at Target for a long time. And when you work in a place that's established, you get a handbook of everything. It's talent acquisition, there's a handbook for that. Everything's there and it's for you to just follow and fall in place. And there's experts and people that have already thought about this and drafted these things out and we're new. So what's great is, we have the opportunity to do that, but we need to do that. So I think that really has been a huge focus of mine. So this is actually something that we're going to roll out to the leaders pretty soon. So just recapping where we've come, you can see we hired so many people this school year, more than we've ever hired before. So just reflecting on that. We've done a lot of work, but there's a lot of work to do. So just going through that.

Melissa Alston:

And then just skip down here. So this is our big push for this year. Our manager of talent acquisition has really thoughtfully came up with not just having a culture fit. Culture fit is great, but culture fit also falls in line with what we're comfortable with. And as you can see, what Malik is saying about excellence is our bar. It's not only about you fitting in the culture, but do you add to the culture? So this is really our theme going forward. So, in the future, you'll see a lot more of that, and we'll be able to provide you with all of the slides decks, but just kind of showing what we've really been working on and how thoughtful we've been there.

Melissa Alston:

And then, in regards to our wins, our response to COVID, even though there's been a lot of cases, way more than we've ever had and reported to the board before, but what I will say is that Kisha has really worked very hard to get through and navigate this, communicating, doing contract tracing of our own, and really making sure that everyone feels supported, that people know what they need to do, that there's resources available. She really, really, really works very hard to do those things and communicate to the leaders as well. And then our wellness program continues to be a win. And then we just have some reminders that might be a little annoying, sorry, but we would like you guys to finish if you haven't done so. If you have, thank you, and sorry for being annoying, but if you have not finished the surveys that Jessica created, they're quick surveys. They don't take that long. If you could please just finish those surveys.

Melissa Alston:

And then the board retreat, we don't have many RSVPs for the board retreat. It's Saturday, February 12th, and all those that went know that it's very engaging and amazing. And if you really, really, really, really... If you're available, please, we really, really want you there. It's best in person. For those that have RSVPed, we sent you out home test kits, and it's just another layer so that everyone is safe and just so you can test before you come to the venue. It's going to be in the same place. So we really, really want you there.

Melissa Alston:

And then the last thing is the board assessment. I know one board member had an issue accessing the survey. If you have an issue, please let me know. I put a ticket in and the board on track people are very, very responsive, and we can get that sorted out for you if you don't have access.

Malik Russell:

Right. Now, you're so nice for that. I like that, but I'm not going to be as nice. So, literally, just RSVP to the board retreat. How many people have we... Melissa, what's the exact numbers?

Melissa Alston:

So we have five responses and four confirmations, out of the five.

Malik Russell:

Okay, so that means we have five people that responded to our RSVP, which I think... So I need a pledge, otherwise we're going to start doing copy emails and putting people that don't respond to RSVPs on a email chain or text chain of some sort. So just, by tonight, everybody should RSVP. We know it's the 12th. Let's RSVP. Let's get it done. Let's do that. Same thing with the assessment. We need the assessment to come in. Part of the retreat, we're going to do the assessment. And so if we don't have the assessments done the next couple days, I'm going to be calling people and going to their house, even in North Carolina, if I have to because I like to travel, but literally, just make sure that you do it. It's just a thing. And again, if we're trying to be an organization of excellence, it starts at the top, and we have to start with the board. And so make sure you RSVP. Melissa puts a bunch of time into doing this. We're putting a bunch of time into doing it. We need to know who's there so we can plan for it and make sure it goes well. And then, similarly, with the board assessments. So to jump off of Anuj's launch, The Words of Community, make sure we're all being present and doing what we need to do.

Tim Bryan:

It's a little tactical question on that. It's not in board on tracks. When you say, "Respond to it," are you talking the Google invite? What exactly?

Melissa Alston:

I'm sorry. Which one are you talking about? The survey or the assessment?

Malik Russell:

We're talking the RSVP.

Melissa Alston:

Oh, it's in a Google Form. Yes. I'll re-share it.

Malik Russell:

The RSVP is in a Google Form for the data.

Tim Bryan:

Gotcha.

Malik Russell:

Assessment is in the board on track, right?

Melissa Alston:

Yes. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Tim Bryan:

I think I responded that. Did I not respond to that? Why did you just say, "Who responded and who didn't?"

Malik Russell:

You might be one of the five, Tim.

Tim Bryan:

No, I want to make sure though. And if I'm not, might as well just-

Malik Russell:

[crosstalk 01:43:07]-

Tim Bryan:

There's a lot of different channels, a lot of different tools.

Melissa Alston:

I have you. Thank you.

Aaron:

[crosstalk 01:43:13]

Malik Russell:

I'm talking about the people that respond. You notice I don't hear anything from Khari. No Khari talk right now.

Aaron:

The assessment, too, I believe we hit 100, if not 100% completion on that in years past. It is a little bit lengthier, so you probably will need about 30 minutes to get through it, but it really has been an invaluable kickoff to our planning process at the board level for the upcoming year. So let's make sure that we're being good partners, as trustees, and being thoughtful about that. It also ensures that we're all on the same page about the priorities that we end up setting for next year at the board level, so.

Malik Russell:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Great. Does anyone have any more questions for Melissa? Thank you for that update. Really appreciate it. And I think we all got the takeaways, fill out the RSVP, do the assessments,

fill out the RSVP, do the assessments. All right, great. And so let's now move on to the finance committee updates, and I will turn it on over to the wonderful Shanta.

Shanta Pressley:

Good evening. Happy New Year. I miss y'all. Where you been? So for finance update, general update would be we had an investor call yesterday, which went very well. Thank you to Melissa, Malik, and fourth sector, Bob being on. Erin and I were on, and school leadership handled it flawlessly. There were minimal questions. They laid out the presentation as far as the transition. And it was good, no question. No major questions. I think they had one question about retention maybe. Yeah. But excellent job-

Malik Russell:

[crosstalk 01:45:29] about retention retention, yeah.

Shanta Pressley:

Yeah, so great job to you guys. Thank you. The only other update, as Melissa mentioned earlier, is that we are asking for a budget amendment, this meeting, to increase some of the things that are needed as far as COVID and a few other things. So you'll hear about it when we move along. And those are the only updates I have for right now. So I'll turn it over to Eugene to give us the December financials.

Eugene Mew:

Good evening, Shanta, and everyone. Thank you. These are the December financials as presented to the finance committee earlier. As of December 31st, our cash is at \$2.295 million, which is we always keep 70,000 in restricted. And the market value of our investment account is \$5.2 million. We have some potential grant funding coming our way through the city council. We have to actually submit the applications, and they are due by the end of February. So there's a potential for up to \$400,000 in additional funding to be used for the school. Got good news from the governor that the 2023 budget is estimated to be 4.7% increase, as opposed to what we were budgeting conservatively, 2.5%. If it goes down a little bit, we see that our metrics are still very good, still well above the DOE benchmarks or well below if that is the case and is warranted.

Eugene Mew:

We also see that enrollment... And we run on a bit of a lag from Kisha, but our enrollment right through this reporting is 658. Kisha stated 676. We'll be closer to that number when we report next month, but everything is still going well. We have a year to date net surplus of 1.4, almost \$1.5 million, versus forecasted surplus of 441,000 and a budgeted surplus of \$354,000. Move to the dashboard. Yes. So as we see in the first dashboard, the balance sheet, the assets are running well above liabilities, so we're doing extremely well there. And to the right, we see that we forecast revenue and expenses to be near equal, but revenue to outpace expenses by year. And, of course, the ratios are still doing very well, as reported earlier.

Eugene Mew:

Moving down, we see that we can see the financial impact of the enrollment. And we see that regular enrollment is down slightly on a monetary basis, \$72,000, but we've received an influx of revenue from the special ed department, particularly the over 60% need, where the special ed net's out at a gain, a surplus projected at \$268,000. And overall, we expect enrollment to be about \$196,000 above budget.

Taking a look at the P&L really quick, again, we see that per pupil revenue is driving an increase in the total revenue expectations, total revenue forecast. We see that we are expecting about \$217,000 forecasted over the budget. In terms of salaries, we also have reaped a bit of a savings, continue to reap a bit of a savings to the tune of \$85,000 forecasted because of the early year, early season vacancies in staffing. Staffing is pretty much fully staffed at this point in time, but we will continue throughout the rest of the year to see some savings as a result of what took place earlier in the year.

Eugene Mew:

In terms of the other than personnel, we've had to forecast a bit higher in some aspects. There was some early-year spending, professional services, which includes substitute services, is higher than we originally projected. And we've spent some additional monies in classroom supplies and operating supplies, so. And Melissa will go into the budget amendments after me, but we've made some amendments in those areas to compensate for the additional spending that was required earlier in the year. But even with the amendments, we still forecast to receive a net surplus at the end of the year of \$441,000, which is still 86, \$87,000 above the original budget.

Eugene Mew:

The investment report for this six-month period, June to December of 2021, we see that we ended June at 5,265,000. And we ended December at 5,245,000, so a net change, a net decrease in value of just short of \$20,000, 0.37%. And I believe there's a balance sheet. We could take a quick look at that statement. Yes. And the balance sheet is, as always, extremely strong. Total current assets of 11.3 or almost \$11.4 million. In terms of fixed assets, we've spent about \$1 million in fixed assets. And those include laptops, smart boards, furniture, and facility upgrades to the facilities. And in terms of liabilities, I mean, we have very little in terms of liabilities, especially in current liabilities. The big number, the \$2.3 million is the fourth per pupil installment, which was received in December, and that will be allocated over the course of January and February. Other than that, very little in liabilities. And we see that our equity is almost \$11.5 million, so a very strong balance sheet. And that is my report.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you, Eugene. Any questions from board members? Before we approve this, I would like Melissa to do the budget amendment because those numbers have already been incorporated here. So if there are any questions there, we can discuss before accepting, Thanks, Eugene.

Eugene Mew:

You're welcome.

Melissa Alston:

This is the proposed budget amendment. Essentially, we would like to right size some of the numbers here. It's important in regards to the budget process, which we're going through right now, to ensure that we are accounting for the expenses. So we can see what the data looks like year over year and making sure that we're in alignment there. So when I do the budget projection for the next year, to propose to Malik, I look at how much we've spent in each line. I look at whether that was a temporary expense. Was it due to COVID? Was it due to an initiative that we did, and it was a one time thing? And things that need to carry on moving forward. So these are all items. All items in here are accounted for in the budget, as Shanta and Eugene said, but also we have the money for this. We're just moving the money around to where we need it.

Melissa Alston:

In regards to K-8s, elementary operations supplies, those are manipulatives and classroom supplies that are needed in the classroom for teachers. A lot of what drove this up is the pandemic and our safety protocols. So a quick example would be, in the past, we'd buy one big box of bulk Crayons. And now we're having to buy two or three of those big boxes and putting them in Ziploc bags, so each scholar can have their own, or purchasing individual boxes of Crayons, in this case, so that everyone is safe in this way. And this is not something we've had to do in the past, so it wasn't an expense we could project moving forward here. So that's just an example, but overall, just having to buy more of the same to ensure everyone's safety.

Melissa Alston:

In addition, you'll see this carry over to high school as well, but here, you have elementary library books and the high school library books down below. This is really a huge initiative. When Malik came on, he wanted us all to have... Every classroom have leveled libraries by genre. And we already have classroom libraries, but it was not on the level that Malik expected. When you go into classrooms, you should see, in each grade, the classes should have the same library. You should know where to find things. The kids should know where to find things. There should be enough books for everyone. There should be a variety of books. And this is something that we really pushed. We needed more book cases. We needed more books in order to really make this happen. So that's what's pulling this expense here is that entire initiative.

Melissa Alston:

So, in regards to operating expenses, this is the last big section. One of the increases here is we accounted for an increase already last school year, as we had increased legal expenses with the transition and creating policies and such, but we continue to have those expenses. So creating a new handbook, review of that handbook, other inquiries from the board, inquiries from us that we've never had to do, and policies we needed to recreate. All of these things have driven up the cost here. So we are looking to right size that bit.

Melissa Alston:

Another initiative that's brand new is our security guards. So we would like to have security guards start in the school. Just another layer of physical safety. Nothing has happened. We just want to make sure that we're ahead of everything always, and making sure this is a process where we want to make sure that the security guards are in line with our culture and understand that we're not a school that has metal detectors and things. We've been very thoughtful, even down to what their uniforms look like and making sure that we're really talking through what our culture looks like, so that we ensure that they fit into that. Another thing-

Malik Russell:

[inaudible 01:57:47] one thing for that security guard. And, obviously, it's about safety, but it's also just about making sure that you're having the right people do the right things. And so wherever was some kind of physical thing that happened, I don't want one of our teachers or one of our staff people, clearly [inaudible 01:58:07] our kids ever having to get involved in that fracas. And so of having just a person that is a professional in that space of deescalation in that right space, it's just prudent. And again, I do want to just echo, it's not that we have been in an unsafe place. It just seems like, from a liability standpoint, I just don't want people feel that they... Their job is to teach. Their job is not to restrain or

deescalate. And so I want the right people doing the right things, in the right spaces. If anything ever does come up. It just seems like a worthwhile concept.

Melissa Alston:

Thank you. So next thing is PTO payout. We started this last year. In June, we had a PTO payout because we needed to get ourselves into our current policy. We changed the policy where we no longer allow rollover PTO. So everyone has the opportunity to be paid out, which was not the case before. So, to do that, we needed to do that initial payout to get us here. And then now, moving forward... We had already done our budget by that point, so this is just ensuring that now, and moving forward, we account for PTO payout. Operations, tech supplies have increased. We've increased our tech. Overall, we have Promethean boards. We have Chrome boxes to go with the Promethean boards. We have two-to-one technology. We just were awarded a grant for a full replacement of Chromebooks for free. So that's over \$200,000 as well. So there's just so much technology that we have in the building. We're going to get new iPads as well, fully funded. So there's just, literally, a lot of connections that we need. So these are really like adapters.

Melissa Alston:

Our new technology has... If you notice if you bought a new laptop lately, they don't have like the same plugs that they had before. You have to buy connections to get things to work and plug in and all of that, so that was not something we anticipated. And that is what's really driving the cost up there, the supplemental items we need to utilize the tech appropriately.

Melissa Alston:

The next thing is we're wanting a little bit of an increase to help our families. We realize that this is a hard time, and we're seeing more so than ever the need to help our families with uniforms, whether it be pants or shirts. So just asking for a little bit of an increase there. This looks a little weird with that 0% there. I called this out to the finance committee as well. The uniform shop just didn't anticipate, I guess, everyone, the city's return to in-person learning, and they were behind on having enough uniforms than usual. The year before that, they didn't have many, a lot of kids were remote, and they just didn't anticipate the increase. So they're just a little behind on sending us the invoice. We just received the invoices and we have to pay them. So I just want it to be accurate in that we don't have anything spent, but we do have \$30,000 worth of invoices that we just received. So we're looking for that \$10,000 increase just to make one last quarter before the end of the school year.

Melissa Alston:

In regards to maintenance of building supplies, this costs us extra. Cleaning supplies, PPE, just in supporting the safety in the building and making sure that we're always at or above any of the mitigating things that we need to do to keep the scholars and the staff and the family safe. So with asking for things to be moved, we also just want to call out a few items where we're able to give some money back to these buckets to offset some of the moves here. So for field trips, in the beginning of... From the beginning of the school year till now, we really didn't go on many. We did so more in those warmer months when we started, but for safety reasons, we haven't gone on any. So just giving back a little bit there, \$30,000. And then our intern program, we were set to have five interns. We were not able to acquire those five interns. We only acquired one for the high school. So giving that money back to the bucket as well.

Melissa Alston:

And then our marketing expenses. So we absolutely need marketing. Marketing is super important, but I just think that we're able to give a little bit money back there \$25,000, and we won't see this cost savings moving forward, but we really were focused on talent and acquiring all of the talent that we needed for the first half of the school year to ensure we were fully staffed. So we really start very hard with marketing six months in. So now is when we're having... We just had the commercial. We have all the photography. There's a ton of things that we're doing now, so we're really off and running, but just because we had different focuses, we're able to have a little bit of a cost savings there. But like I said, especially going into expansion, we want to continue to build our brand. So we will move forward with the increases that we have projected for marketing there.

Melissa Alston:

So overall, the impact will be a little bit over \$400,000. Whenever we do anything, we really partner with Fourth Sector. So we meet with Fourth Sector once a week, and we talk about all of our financials and just, we have one-off conversations too. We don't do anything without connecting with them. So if Malik has an idea or I have an idea, we shoot it over to the team and they talk to us about what the implications are and such, so we're very much in line. And they're supporting all of these changes as well. And then just looking ahead down here, so for capital expenses, the board has already approved the architect expenses, but just putting that forward again, just as a reminder, as we talk about the budget. And then our facilities part two upgrades, so this is just those leftover items, where we did a lot of the work, like paint the building, repaint the interior, all of those items, do the Promethean boards, and install those. That was part one of the facilities upgrade. It was just too ambitious to do all of those things and do them well in last summer, so we're working on ramping up that second piece there.

Melissa Alston:

And a lot of those pieces are detailed pieces. I actually just walked with the interior designer today, and we talked about replacing the blue tiles. We have blue trim tiles because that was our old school colors and changing those and changing the molding and getting new shades for the classrooms and just those detail things to really like step it up, as well as our 312 furniture transition. We're looking to purchase new furniture. And all of those items were spoken about in the previous approval from the board, but just putting that on the top as [inaudible 02:05:54].

Melissa Alston:

Lastly, we are potentially looking at having to upgrade our server. This is just very preliminary, so when we have more information, we'll let you know, but I just wanted to put it here to give everyone a preview that we may need to upgrade our servers. And this, potentially, may be covered by a grant that we are trying to apply for that Fourth Sector's helping us with. And the grant is tied to the community leaders. So Claudia, the manager of talent, acquisition, and marketing has already proactively reached out and has invited those leaders to the school so that, in the next two months, when that grant goes across their desk, they can say, "Oh, I went to that school. That school is really amazing. I have swag from the school." And they can really identify with us, and we're not just another school asking for something. So we're really proactively engaging the region and the community leaders there.

Malik Russell:

Great. Yeah, just one thing I want to add on to the amendment concept. So just to understand, we were... I'm making up numbers. And, Eugene, correct me if I'm wrong. We were \$800,000 in surplus.

With these kind of changes, we are still \$86,000 ahead of where we were budgeted, which pushed us at a \$400,000-plus number surplus.

Eugene Mew:

That's correct.

Malik Russell:

So I want to just put that in context because, obviously, the number sounds big, but we were doing really well based on what we were talking about, and we're still ahead of our budget, which is still a surplus. And so I want to put those numbers, in a broad sense, to clarify because, obviously, we want to be transparent, but we also want to make sure you have the context. Eugene, did I say anything wrong?

Eugene Mew:

No, that's correct.

PART 4 OF 5 ENDS [02:08:04]

Malik Russell:

Eugene, did I say anything wrong?

Eugene Mew:

No, that's correct. We originally budgeted for \$350,000 surplus. And even with these changes, we expect to come in at around 441,000, which is still \$86,000 ahead of the budget.

Melissa Alston:

So Jessica asked a question in the chat in regards to the change for NYU interns. So just to provide some context there, thank you for your question. Essentially, Lighthouse managed this partnership, and it was transferred over to us in January. The partnership was already established, as you all know. You all approved us having this partnership a few years ago. I think it was midyear we took over. We didn't start fresh at the beginning of the school year. And there were some assumptions that we had, that we needed to clear up. So I think after we were only able to acquire one intern, I really dug and asked questions about, "Could you give us feedback? Why do you feel like we only got one intern?" Through the conversations and digging that we had, we realized that we thought that the internship was required to have a \$25,000, not supplement, salary, with a \$10,000 supplement to their tuition.

Melissa Alston:

We thought that was the program. So as we went through this, we realized that that was the minimum, not the requirement. So what I realized was that we were not competitive enough. So as much as you come to the school, you have a great interview experience. If someone else is paying you \$40,000, and you're going to have the same experience and have the same supplemental tuition, you are probably not going to pick our school if you financially can't make that work. And I think that that was the biggest takeaway that I had. So after bringing that feedback to Malik, he absolutely said, "That makes sense. We need to increase it. What is everybody else doing so that we can be competitive?" So I think moving forward, we're going to be in a much better space. And we've cultivated this partnership. We know that it's important.

Melissa Alston:

It's important for retention as well, because just embedded in the program, you have to work. After you do your one year of internship, you have to give us two years of working at the school. So just inherently, that helps us with retention, so we know how important this is. And we already, now, for the next school year, have two interns locked in and ready to go. And we're looking to acquire two more there. And then we've also interviewed four with NYU to have a partnership with them for inclusive classroom, to help us with our ICT model and expansion. And they've approved that as well. So I feel that we already changed this around, but I think we kind of needed to have a very transparent conversation so that we [inaudible 02:11:16].

Jessica Boulet:

Cool. Thank you.

Shanta Pressley:

Thanks, Melissa.

Malik Russell:

Paying people half what they get paid other places is not a good way to go. [inaudible 02:11:29].

Shanta Pressley:

Right.

Jessica Boulet:

I'll just also add right now that overall, thank you for sharing all of this. It seems like it really reflects the level of both proactive strategicness, and kind of your ability to think on your toes as our needs have changed during the pandemic. And it seems very thoughtful. So overall-

Melissa Alston:

Thank you [crosstalk 02:12:08].

Jessica Boulet:

I very much enjoyed getting that breakdown and hearing more about it. And at least my view is, a surplus is there to serve the kids. So I'm glad that you both are [inaudible 02:12:25].

Shanta Pressley:

Yes, the money is managed very well. Not a dollar goes wasted. And just add to the NYU interns, it's important to keep that line item, because Melissa helped me understand that when we have those interns, the objective is to have them become staff members at the school, so it's easier to transition them in. So it's important that we keep that there, in that relationship, build that relationship and get people that we want to have add to the culture.

Malik Russell:

Yeah. I feel like those partnerships are really important. NYU's a good program, so it's lots of really smart aligned people. It's not the same level, of course, as our TFA conversations, but we have a strong

relationship with TFA, Kurt from TFA. And so we really value these kind of partnerships that give us kind of talented people that want to get into education and maintaining and extending those relationships is really important. And so we are focused on doing that, especially given all the stuff I've talked to you about. Finding teachers is hard.

Shanta Pressley:

Yeah. Yeah. So I think that's it. I just want to let the board know that everything that was presented tonight obviously was submitted to, or presented to, the finance committee. There were some questions asked that we got clarity on, particularly around the surplus and the grant that's coming, or the additional funding that's coming and what it can be used for. And I believe that was all. So we are comfortable with what was presented tonight. So at this time I move that we accept the financial report that has been given. And then I'll ask for the vote to accept the budget amendment. Or should I do the budget amendment first? It doesn't matter? Okay.

Tim Bryan:

Yeah.

Shanta Pressley:

Okay. I move to accept the financial report.

Tim Bryan:

I second that [inaudible 02:14:36].

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you, Tim. Anuj?

Anuj Khatiwada:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Jessie?

Jessica Boulet:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Aaron?

Aaron:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Ellen?

Ellen Chen:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Constance?

Constance Barnes-Watson:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Michael.

Michael Dorrie:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Awesome. Thank you guys for that. And the next vote is to accept the budget amendment. So I move that we accept the budget amendment, as presented.

Ellen Chen:

I'll second that. And I'm an aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you, Ellen. Anuj?

Anuj Khatiwada:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Jessie?

Jessica Boulet:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Aaron?

Aaron:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you. Tim?

Tim Bryan:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Khari?

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Constance?

Constance Barnes-Watson:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Michael.

Michael Dorrie:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Awesome. Thank you guys. So everything is in place. School leadership, have at it. One other thing I want to mention before moving on is that they are also working on the budgets. So as we did last year, I believe in March, we are looking to vote on the salaries. So just be prepared for that. Last year was, what? About 85% of the budget? So once we get that vote in place, the... Oh, thank you, Melissa. Always on point. You want to take us through this timeline, or Malik? One of you guys?

Malik Russell:

I'll let Melissa do it.

Shanta Pressley:

Okay.

Melissa Alston:

Yes. Thank you. So right now, as I said before, currently analyzing the budget and drafting, what that looks like for next year. And we also just got the budget amendment proof, so we can see that we're in line there in January. We also have already started our org chart reassessment. As I said, we've already had three meetings, and we have one more next week. So we talked about leaders first. Then we talked about the lower school teachers, and now we are in the high school teacher's phase of the org chart assessment. And then we are looking, as Shanta said, to get the salary portions approved in March, and Malik will be going through and talking to the board, as he did last year, in regards to the budget, we want to make sure this is something that he started last year, and really just having more visibility and context to the different decisions that we're requesting in regards to the budget than we had in past years.

Melissa Alston:

So we'll continue to do that, and then continue to make edits as needed, based on anything we find, and obviously based on the board's feedback. And then we're looking to hand out offer letters the first week of May. So we're looking for, and potentially earlier with this timeline, it gives us time to kind of go through and see when we want that to be April or May. But as we know, it's very important, and especially through these times in the pandemic and uncertainty in other spaces that people feel and know ahead of time that they are going to have a job, and that's important to us as well. So we don't want people to be waiting out to hear if they are coming back for the next school year. And then in June, we're looking to have the budget approved fully by the board.

Shanta Pressley:

Awesome. Thank you.

Aaron:

Just a reminder, we're talking, this is budget, and then also, I think it's a five year budget forecast, if I remember correctly?

Shanta Pressley:

Yes. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Aaron:

Great. Great.

Shanta Pressley:

And last thing, we will be looking to have a meeting about our investment portfolio with JP Morgan and I will keep you guys updated about that. I'll turn it back over to Malik.

Malik Russell:

[inaudible 02:19:20] appreciate it and let's bring back up the agenda. Thank you, Shanta, for that. I appreciate it. And Eugene, appreciate all of your input. And obviously, Melissa, as well. There was a lot of work in finance committee and I think that work made it very transparent and easy for us to kind of understand what was happening. Can I see the agenda, Melissa? Is that up? Okay, great. So next we will go to Ellen for the education committee update.

Ellen Chen:

Thanks, Malik. Hey, guys. We didn't have much numbers, much data, this month. So Kurt went over the plan for our new math teaching methods, and as well as we talked about that there is a newly revived grading policy. So that would be very exciting to see and see how this new policy will affect our overall population. Other than that, please, I invite the rest of the board to join our committee. I believe Malik and Khari, you guys will be going over the math tutorial at some point, right? So please, we can connect offline and talk about that to try to set up a time whenever you guys think is appropriate. Other than that-

Malik Russell:

Yeah, I think for the math thing, that's going to be part of the retreat.

Ellen Chen:

Oh, okay. Well, I unfortunately will be traveling so I cannot attend. It will be recorded, right?

Malik Russell:

Yes. For you, specifically.

Ellen Chen:

Awesome. All right. That's all from me. Thank you.

Malik Russell:

Sounds great. Appreciate that. Thank you, Ellen. And then next I will go to Aluta for external relations committee update.

Aluta Khanyile:

Good evening, everyone. I hope everyone had a happy new year, a happy safe new year. I think this is the first time we're touching base since we're in 2022. Just with regards to external relations [inaudible 02:22:09] initiated the conversations with three different organizations within the Bronx that are nonprofit organizations, with the effort and desire of [inaudible 02:22:25] and making it an option for non-profit workers in the south Bronx who have children that are currently attending schools [inaudible 02:22:33] where we are with the changes with the pandemic in terms of in person learning versus school from home and just give people information. That's really where we are right now with everybody coming back into the office in January from the holiday season. So I'm getting more and more responses as time is going.

Malik Russell:

Okay. Thank you. I really appreciate that. And then Aaron, I'll have you move for-

Speaker 1:

Hello?

Malik Russell:

Hello? Can you hear me?

Speaker 1:

I was going to say, you still got me?

Shanta Pressley:

Oh, I do. I do. I thought you had finished. I apologize.

Speaker 1:

Oh yes. Yes. I'm done.

Malik Russell:

Oh, okay. Great. All right. Thank you, Aluta. I appreciate that. And then Aaron, I'll have you move for public comment.

Aaron:

Yep. Okay, great. Thanks. Thanks, Malik. So at this time, would like to open this up for public comments. I'm looking now to see... I don't think I see any members of the public. Yes. I don't see any members of the public on my end in Zoom. Are there any members of the public that are interested in speaking this evening? Okay. Hearing none. We will close out this portion and move ahead. Thanks, Malik.

Malik Russell:

Thank you. Appreciate it. And now we'll go to board governance and have Jessica.

This transcript was exported on Feb 01, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Jessica Boulet:

All right. So first order as always, I move to approve the December 2021 board meeting minutes.

Aaron:

[inaudible 02:24:25].

Jessica Boulet:

Thank you, Aaron. Shanta?

Shanta Pressley:

Aye.

Melissa Alston:

Ellen?

Ellen Chen:

Hi.

Jessica Boulet:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Anuj.

Anuj Khatiwada:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Tim?

Tim Bryan:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Let's see here. Constance?

Constance Barnes-Watson:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

And I see Khari? Oh, wait. There's... Wait. Oh, no, I went out of order. Kamaria.

Kamaria Brisseau:

I'm sorry. That must have been me. I turned on my camera. Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Ni worries. All right. And Khari.

Khari Shabazz:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

And Michael.

Michael Dorrie:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Great. Thank you, everyone. Second item is, as promised from last month, our new recurring agenda item, which is the individual goal setting sort of initiative, which is just, again as a refresher, kind of something we came up with in the governance committee as kind of a different way for people to engage and to think about both what they joined the board for as an individual and in terms of what they wanted to give and what they wanted to learn. And just, it's meant to be kind of a low key, creative, maybe, you could think about it, endeavor of thinking about, "Well, what am I interested in this month or in the next couple months?" Be it big or small. Whatever lift makes sense at the time. But to kind of engage in a different and personal way with the work we do here as a board and the ideas that Melissa is kindly sharing on her screen.

Jessica Boulet:

Thank you. Are just kind of a starting place, but definitely these are meant to be personal and fun and interesting. So this month, Aaron kindly agreed to share what he has been working on, which I don't know anything about. So take it away, Aaron.

Aaron:

The real joke would be if I didn't know anything about it. So I thought this tool was well laid out because it was aligned to our strategic board initiatives. And so I think for me, what a lot of this past month has been, has been taking stock of where we are kind of midway through our first year and our new org structure and then taking stock of what my role has been so far this year, and then what it needs to be the next six months and what our priorities need to be. So I think the answer to your direct question, Jessica, has been me sort of actually taking the time to step back from the day to day and think about what I want to do over the next six months.

Aaron:

And I identified a few things. One of them I touched on in December, was already in the works, is just making sure that I'm in touch with each of you and get a chance to catch up with each of you individually. So if you haven't heard from me yet, that'll be coming. Anuj and I actually split up the list of trustee members, so it'll be from one of the two of us. And then also working on, I think, pivoting more back to a true trustee role in the long term, as we've laid a really strong foundation for the next iteration of the school over the past 18 months. So that gets me back to the original priorities that I think I talked with you all about when I first became chair around ensuring that we as a board have a good relationship with other boards.

Aaron:

So taking part in the initiative that Jessica or I, I forget who actually passed along to the board in terms of the New York Charter Center. And then also just building relationships with board members at different schools. I had [inaudible 02:28:40] introduced me to one in another school. So just really making sure that we're out in the community, learning from other boards, and seeing what else is going on in the New York charter world. And then the last thing I wanted to touch on is just that it's important that as we do really get a foundation built out for us, that we do keep doing the little things. So making sure that I hold myself accountable to reading the minutes each month, to reading the board materials in advance each month. And I actually thought that the trustee evaluation was a good reminder for a couple items that had maybe slipped off my radar.

Aaron:

But it's critical that we do the little things in and out each day, as board members, the things that we need to do to make sure that we're an effective governing body. And so it was a good time for me to take stock and get back focused and make sure we do the right things. We stay intense and we stay ambitious through the second half of the year.

Tim Bryan:

Hey, Aaron I actually got a question that's a tangent off that on the board assessment. I feel like there's some questions that just don't apply to us. Is that just a standardized assessment that board on track has, or is there ways that can customize that for us?

Aaron:

Yeah. Good question, Tim. That is a standardized assessment. The way that I would think about it is, it's an inventory of practices that boards use. I think the purpose is to allow us take stock of where we are, and then decide from those, which we think will have the most impact over the next year. We can't do everything. So it really helps us kind of see everything that's out there, think about the organization, think about what we think it needs to have the most impact in the next year. And then put that out on paper. I hope that helps.

Tim Bryan:

Gotcha. Yeah, and not a big deal but it's the whole fundraising part. That's just an NA. It's almost-

Aaron:

Yeah. Right. Right.

Tim Bryan:

So...

Aaron:

Yeah. Yeah. It's an inventory question, not a tailored one. And it's that way, because we kick off the reflection cycle with it.

Tim Bryan:

Cool.

Jessica Boulet:

Yeah. That's a great question, Tim. And I'm going to talk about that in just a second here. But first-

Tim Bryan:

Oops.

Jessica Boulet:

Don't worry. Did anybody else want to respond to Aaron's wonderful sharing moment?

Tim Bryan:

A technical term.

Jessica Boulet:

Yeah. Super technical. Thank you, Aaron, for sharing that and for kind of walking us through that. Oh, I was just going to add, I was thinking earlier, Khari, when you were talking about already doing a visit and doing one more visit, I might have you start talking about that sometime, if you do take another visit.

Khari Shabazz:

No problem.

Jessica Boulet:

So let me know if you want to. But yeah, in general, if anybody's doing anything interesting, found out anything interesting, learn anything interesting, kind of continual learning points. So definitely feel free to just shoot me a text message or an email if you're feeling inspired. Otherwise I will come for you eventually.

Jessica Boulet:

Next item is the board self assessment, and I will start by saying that I will not apologize for adding my voice to the reminder on these self assessments. In fact, probably we should apologize to Melissa for making her send us all these emails. But yeah, just a quick little touch point on that. The open meeting law assessments I think are actually going really well. Thank you to everybody who took them already. And if you have haven't yet, please do go and take that as soon as you can. They're very quick. But I've been really excited about some of the interesting points coming up. And I think that we'll definitely be taking a little visit to those on the PD day as well. For the longer board self assessment... So

interestingly, I think our percentage of people responding to the trustee OML self assessment and the board on-track self assessment is inverted.

Jessica Boulet:

We have barely over a third of people responding to the board on-track one, which, as Tim kind of alluded to, is kind of a reflection of the fact that it's extremely long and not necessarily well tailored to our needs. So that is something that's already on the Governance Committee's radar. So as a final word of an encouragement, I would say, if all goes well, this will be the last standard, one-size-fits-all board on-track inventory you have to take, but it is very helpful and we will use it this year, and maybe next year it will be better and shorter. So yes, that is all I have to say on that topic. And I think that covers my last two items. So I think that just leaves the vote, Aaron, on remote option. Unless anybody has any additional comments.

Aaron:

Okay. Great. Great. So this is a vote that we took last year. And I think we talked about it earlier in the year, but for the sake of clearly articulating it as a board and making sure that we've set up our leadership team to be able to operate within the confines of our bylaws, I'm proposing a vote here to authorize Malik as Executive Director to have the ability to pivot the school between partial, complete, or in place remote learning as the situation on the ground dictates so that we can best protect the safety of our community and also do whatever is necessary to promote strong learning amongst our scholars. Do I have a second for that vote or... Actually before I do that, is there any questions about the vote, why we're taking it, or anything anyone wants to discuss before we vote? Okay. Hearing none that-

Ellen Chen:

I trust Malik's judgment.

Aaron:

Do I have a second for the vote?

Ellen Chen:

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

Aaron:

Great. And I am an aye as well for the minutes. Let's see here. Jessica, you're first.

Jessica Boulet:

Aye.

Aaron:

Anuj?

Anuj Khatiwada:

Aye.

Aaron:
Shanta?

Shanta Pressley:
Aye.

Aaron:
Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:
Aye.

Aaron:
Constance?

Constance Barnes-Watson:
Aye.

Aaron:
Khari?

Constance Barnes-Watson:
Aye.

Aaron:
Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:
Aye.

Aaron:
Michael?

Michael Dorrie:
Aye.

Aaron:
Tim?

Tim Bryan:
Aye.

Aaron:

And I feel like I missed somebody. Maybe not. Did I miss anybody?

Kisha Perez:

No.

Aaron:

Oppose? Great. Thank you.

Shanta Pressley:

Great. Thanks a lot. Actually, we will not need the executive session. That was something that we could do in February. It will be around the evaluation process. And so with that, we can go to closing items and adjournment, unless anyone has any more questions, add-ons, or discussions of things that they want to discuss.

Aaron:

Just a quick record keeping. Thanks for the update, Malik. Kisha, on the permanent record for that, can we just change it to no executive session?

Kisha Perez:

Yes.

Aaron:

I made that look way more stressful than it actually was.

Kisha Perez:

I got you.

Malik Russell:

All right. So with that, we can go to adjournment. Aaron, if you can adjourn?

Aaron:

Okay, great. We've touched on it a million times, so I will just say it one and more. Board retreat, RSVP to Melissa. Really hope to see everybody, either virtually or in person, at the February retreat. I think the July retreat was incredibly valuable. And I just miss you guys. So hope to see everybody here in February in some capacity. Like I said, I'm making concerted effort to connect with each of you over the next couple months, just so we can take stock and give folks a space to connect outside of here. Obviously, if you have anything you'd like to discuss, I'm here. Otherwise, really looking forward to jumping into the second half of the school year, and I thank everybody for what they've put in into this month's board meeting. Motion to adjourn?

Malik Russell:

Second.

Shanta Pressley:

This transcript was exported on Feb 01, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Second. Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Aye.

Michael Dorrie:

Aye.

Melissa Alston:

Aye.

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye and bye.

Shanta Pressley:

[crosstalk 02:38:34].

Aaron:

Have a great one. You guys stay safe.

PART 5 OF 5 ENDS [02:38:42]