

This transcript was exported on Feb 28, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Malik Russell:

(silence).

Malik Russell:

Miss Hart, is that wall of books a background or that's just how you get down?

Latoya Hart:

It's a wall of books.

Malik Russell:

Oh, I like it. I'm into it.

Latoya Hart:

Thank you.

Malik Russell:

That's real. That looks really good.

Ellen Chen:

Is that your home?

Latoya Hart:

It's my boyfriend's house.

Ellen Chen:

Oh, wow. I like [crosstalk 00:06:15].

Malik Russell:

That's why, Ellen, [crosstalk 00:06:15]. I'm going to stop this conversation now, okay? (silence).

Malik Russell:

All right, Kurt, just turn off your camera then. Be that way. (silence).

Malik Russell:

Maybe give it another... so five, I don't know, two or three? Sorry. (silence).

Malik Russell:

I just want to hear that. Does anyone know if [Anu 00:09:03] is coming on? No. Aaron indicated that he going to be off and on, so I think we can get started. But I just wanted know if Anu is getting on. Does anyone know or want to reach out to him?

Melissa Alston:

He didn't. He RSVP'd no.

Malik Russell:

Oh, he RSVP'd no? Okay, great. And Constance has already said that she wasn't going to be able to make it. Jessica, do we have quorum or do you want to just start it with it and then we can figure it out?

Jessica Boulet:

Let me count. Hold on. Yeah. I guess we're at exactly 50%. I think we can start. We might want to wait to take a vote until we have more than that.

Malik Russell:

Okay, great. All right, it sounds great. I appreciate that. All right, let's get started on this wonderful Thursday evening. Hey, hey. Come on. Sophia, I didn't want to yawn from that. I wanted like, a "Hey." Let's get on and popping up in here. All right. So obviously, you know that we just saw each other this Saturday. I want to thank you everybody again for putting in the time with it. So we're going to have a little bit of a abbreviated concept so we had Jessica do a lot of work on Saturday. A lot of stuff does not need to return. But we are going to open the same way that we have been opening. And so we are going to get started. I believe that Ellen's going to be the one to start us off, so we can share the screen? So actually, can we go first to the agenda? Sorry. Because I always miss stuff. Now, I want to make sure I do not. What else we got? Attendance and guests. Okay, Kisha, did you record attendance and guests?

Kisha Perez:

Yes. We just have to call the meeting to order.

Malik Russell:

In absence of Aaron. Jessica, can you call the meeting to order? Does that work?

Jessica Boulet:

Sure. I move to call the meeting to order. I think that should do it.

Malik Russell:

Perfect. And then a quick look at the agenda. As you said, we're not going to really have a school update as we update you a whole lot. I'm sure you don't want to hear us talk that much more. We then get to the finance committee and then the other committee updates and that we end with... Yeah, I think we have one governance vote that we need to have on a policy, and I think that's where we are. So now, let's go to and make sure that we are starting, kicking us the meeting with one reflecting on the mission. And then we're going to have Ellen give her reflection on self-advocacy. So we put the mission and three pillars up. Thank you.

Malik Russell:

And Ellen, if you could read the self-advocacy pillar to the group and then give your reflection on what resonates you with it in your personal life as well as how it relates to why you do this work.

Ellen Chen:

Sure. Do you want me to start out?

Malik Russell:

Yes, that would be great. Thank you.

Ellen Chen:

Self-advocacy our scholars are empowered to advocate for themselves, their families, and our communities. As our scholars come to understand that their voices are valued and needed, they to advocate for themselves. Our scholars are seen and valued; they understand that not only do they have the right to express their opinions, views, and perspectives, but it is their obligation to do so.

Ellen Chen:

This is very important to me as an immigrant who came to the US at the age of 10. I learned that nobody was really going to stand up for me. I have to voice what I was thinking, how I was feeling, what was right and wrong to me. So believe it or not, prior to coming to US, I was an extremely shy girl. I couldn't even tell the kid next to me to stop kicking my shoes.

Ellen Chen:

So this forced change, really allowed me to come out of my cocoon. And it has helped me tremendously, not only with what I want from myself, but also how to allow others to see me as, and to talk to me. So I feel like as our population in the school, we have a lot of immigrants. And I know that because English may not be their first language, they don't feel like they need to voice their opinions, views, and perspectives which is incredibly harmful, not only to themselves but to their peers as well. Because how else are we going to learn from others? How else are we going to work well together with others if we, as individuals, don't have a voice?

Ellen Chen:

So I really like this pillar. And I think that because it means so much to me on a very personal level, I'm here to support whatever we need to do to help our kids to really learn to express themselves and to be a true member of our society.

Malik Russell:

Thanks lot. I really do appreciate that. I really actually really appreciate you sharing your personal journey with it. That's very helpful and thoughtful so thanks a lot. I really appreciate you for that. All right, thank you. As we go back to the agenda, we may start off with and Shanta and the finance committee updates.

Shanta Pressley:

Sure. Good evening, everyone so general update. Can you guys hear me okay?

Malik Russell:

A little bit. There's a little background noise in there so we can't hear great but we can hear you, but there's a little background.

Shanta Pressley:

Okay. I'm sorry. I'll try to make it quick and go back on mute. So general update, school leadership and operations are working on the budget. We have reviewed that timeline and everything is on schedule. And I just want the board to just keep note that we'll be looking to vote on the salaries for that in the next coming month that we did last year. And that's it from that perspective. And we'll go through the votes coming up. So right now, I'll turn it over to Eugene just to give us the January financial.

Eugene Mew:

Good evening, everyone and thank you. It seems like there's still light outside. It's first time I've ever been able to present this early. So here are the financials for January as previously presented to the finance committee.

Eugene Mew:

As we see total cash as of January 31 is just \$9.3 million. Market value of our investment account, it's \$5.2 million. We did pick up nine students in March in this particular cycle, per pupil cycle, which is the fourth per pupil cycle. So Kisha and Melissa's efforts are definitely reaping benefits at this stage. We've picked up quite a few students.

Eugene Mew:

As we go further down, we see net assets are all consistent over \$11.5 million. So they remain consistent throughout the year. All of the ratios look great through this period. 5.3 for current ratio is outstanding. The school carries very little debt. So the current a current ratio is affected by that in a very positive way as well as the other ratios including debt service coverage ratio. Everything is really influenced mightily by the fact that liabilities remain low for the school.

Eugene Mew:

As we go down a little further, we see again budget enrollment, 662, but enrollment at the most recent billing was 667. So now that we are exceeding budget in terms of the regular per pupil as well as the SPED per pupil. That has led to a net surplus through January of \$1.5 million which is well above the forecasted surplus of \$581,000 which also exceeds the budgeted surplus of \$354,000.

Eugene Mew:

We move forward. Again, the ratios, and this is the chance to see them in graph form, but many of them were on the previous page and everything looks great. To the right, we see the forecasted revenue versus expenses. We certainly expect revenue to exceed expenses at the end of the year. We expect days cash to come in at around 221 at the end of the year. And we also expect debt-to-asset ratio to remain below the benchmark.

Eugene Mew:

Moving a little further down and here we see a financial impact of the per pupil increase. Now, the regular per pupil is above the budgeted per pupil. We see that at this moment we're \$68,000 above that. And SPED per pupil funding has been consistently well above budget. And we expect to receive \$241,000 above budget at the year end. And the bottom graphs show that there was a dip during October and November period, but we're starting to climb back up in per pupil.

Eugene Mew:

Move forward. And this is the income statement. As we see, doing great. Again, per pupil is now above budget. The forecasted per pupil is above budget now by \$68,000. The forecasted per pupil for SPED is well above the budgeted amount of \$655,000. And that's given total revenue of forecasted increase of \$357,000.

Eugene Mew:

And in terms of expenses and instructional expenses, we continue to reap some benefits of not being fully staffed early on. It's great to know that we are now fully staffed, but we're still reaping some of the benefits from earlier in the year. And that is all said a little bit in the expenses by some increases in certain line items, professional services which includes temporary staffing, that it had to be increased a little bit because of the early year shortages. And we've expended more supplies throughout the early part of this year than originally budgeted. But overall, the expenses we expect the \$215,000 increase which still brings us in at about \$226,000 in terms of forecasted profit over the budget. So the budget being a \$354,000 number, we expect to increase to \$581,000 which is above \$226,000 above budget.

Eugene Mew:

We could take a look at the balance sheet, the last page. The next one, Melissa. The last page.

Melissa Alston:

This is the last page?

Eugene Mew:

Yeah. This one right here. Yeah. So we see that in current assets, very strong, \$10 million. We certainly spent a lot of money in fixed assets, but that is all to the benefit of the school with new computers and building improvements and new furniture. All of those fixed assets were well spent. And so we're at about \$4 million total fixed assets, \$3 million net fixed assets including depreciation.

Eugene Mew:

And again, liabilities, very low accounts payable [inaudible 00:22:47] \$31,000. We have some accruals in there. And deferred revenue is just the February portion of per pupil which will be allocated to revenue in February. And net assets, as we see, \$11.5 million, just very strong and very strong balance sheet overall. And that is my report.

Shanta Pressley:

Awesome. Thank you, Eugene. Board members, any question? All right, hearing no questions. The finance committee did go through last week as we usually do [inaudible 00:23:34] to the board meeting. Didn't have the budget amendment [inaudible 00:23:41] that we voted for for last month. So with that said, if there are no questions, I move that we accept the financial report...

Ellen Chen:

Oh, no. I think we lost her.

Shanta Pressley:

You can't hear me?

Ellen Chen:

Oh, there-

Malik Russell:

She needs a second.

Tim Bryan:

Hi. This is Tim. I signed in and I'm an aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you, Tim. All right, I'll do a poll. Ellen?

Ellen Chen:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Sophie?

Sophia Huda:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

[Justine 00:24:23]?

Justine:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Aluta? Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you. Aaron?

Aaron Bothner:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you, board members. And moving on with the agenda, so February for our investment policy is [inaudible 00:24:55] committee members. We would like to just allow the finance committee to be that committee. Also to [inaudible 00:00:25:07] leadership. So I'll just [inaudible 00:25:11]. I moved to nominate the finance committee [inaudible 00:25:23]. Can I have a second?

Aluta Khanyile:

You came chopped up for me. I don't know if that was the same for everyone else.

Malik Russell:

If it's okay, I can repeat what she said. She's moving to nominate the finance committee as the investment committee.

Aaron Bothner:

And I think just a small technicality, we're nominating is the current members of the finance committee to be the investment committee. If the finance committee shuffles in June, the investment committee would remain the same unless the board votes on amendment to that slate at that time just so everybody knows what we're talking about. So the current members of the finance committee would be the members of the investment committee through February 2023.

Tim Bryan:

This is Tim I second that and I'm an aye.

Malik Russell:

Jessica? Aaron?

Aaron Bothner:

Aye.

Malik Russell:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Malik Russell:

Sophia?

Sophia Huda:

Aye.

Kisha Perez:

I'm an aye.

Ellen Chen:

I'm also an aye. it's Ellen.

Malik Russell:

Great. I appreciate it.

Shanta Pressley:

Awesome. Thank you. I think I heard everyone. I'm back. Can you hear me? Malik, would you mind-

Malik Russell:

Yeah, appreciate it.

Shanta Pressley:

Okay, perfect. Would you mind navigating the final vote as well just to accept the investment as current?

Malik Russell:

Yup. So, yeah, right. So the final vote is going to be to accept to continue to hold the current investment holdings as is. Let's say we've had discussion, it's a conservative piece of treasuries over a piece of time. We're going to re-look at it in June and July. But to vote to accept that and continue the current investment holding is as is.

Shanta Pressley:

This is Shanta. I'm an aye.

Malik Russell:

I need a second first. I apologize. I need a second.

Ellen Chen:

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

Malik Russell:

Okay. Thank you, Ellen. Shanta?

Shanta Pressley:

Aye.

Malik Russell:

Aaron?

Aaron Bothner:

Aye.

Malik Russell:

Tim?

Tim Bryan:

Aye.

Malik Russell:

Sophia?

Sophia Huda:

Aye.

Malik Russell:

Jessica?

Jessica Boulet:

Aye.

Malik Russell:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Malik Russell:

Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Malik Russell:

I believe that's all ayes. So I'll turn it back over to Shanta.

Shanta Pressley:

Awesome. Thank you all for your patience. And that is the finance report for the month. And I'll turn it back over to Malik.

Malik Russell:

Okay. Thank you so much. And now I will turn it over to Ellen for the education committee updates.

Ellen Chen:

Sure. I believe the team has been working with IAs for the past few days now. And I think that we will have some numbers to present to the board next month. Other than that, I am all set.

Malik Russell:

Thank you so much. I appreciate that. Aluta, external relations committee.

Aluta Khanyile:

Hey, good evening, everyone. I hope everyone's doing well.

Malik Russell:

Good evening, Aluta. Thank you

Aluta Khanyile:

Everybody, can you hear me great?

Malik Russell:

Yes, absolutely.

Aluta Khanyile:

Okay, wonderful. So some of the updates that I have for this months, I've been in discussion with a couple individuals from particularly two not-for-profit organizations in the Bronx with regards to in terms of efforts of advertising Nuasin and offering services to their staff specifically organizations that are centered around the South Bronx where the school is nearby offering the application period and all the information regarding applying to the school for their children and just how that will look. I would have to have conversations with obviously, yourself, Malik, and Melissa as to what the materials that we have from the school presently that we can provide to them.

Aluta Khanyile:

In addition, I've also been having conversations with regards to what the cost analysis looks like as well as the returns from doing a fundraising dinner where we can have a number of individuals obviously, from the school and partners come by tables and see how the numbers of that look and how that could possibly work for our school. Other than that, that's the updates I have for you this month.

Malik Russell:

Thank you, Aluta. I appreciate that and I think one definitely appreciates the partnerships. I think we should have further conversation on what that looks like exactly. And then regarding the fundraising concept, glad we're getting in that space. But also I wanted to make sure that we solidify a context/strategy of what we do. And I think we should probably start having that conversation this month, and I'll make sure we put something on the calendar for that. So I appreciate that a lot.

Aluta Khanyile:

Great.

Malik Russell:

Thanks lot. Okay. Aaron, now, listen to you regarding public comments.

Aaron Bothner:

Great. Thanks. Thanks, Malik. I was unable to get Zoom to work. So Melissa or Kisha, could either of you let me know if there are any members of the public present?

Melissa Alston:

There are not.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. So, I'll go through the motions here anyway. So this is our time for public comments where the public can come to address the board. We have a registration and a public comment policy in place for anybody who would be interested. It does not appear we have any members of the public with us this evening. So we will go ahead and move to the next section of the agenda. Thanks.

Malik Russell:

Thank you, Aaron. I appreciate that. And next, we'll move on to board governance with Jessica.

Jessica Boulet:

All right. So first, I moved to approve the January 2022 board meeting minutes.

Ellen Chen:

I'll second that and I'm an aye. It's Ellen.

Jessica Boulet:

Thanks, Ellen. I'm also an aye. Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

I'm an aye as well.

Jessica Boulet:

Thank you and Aaron?

Aaron Bothner:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Tim?

Tim Bryan:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Sophia?

Sophia Huda:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Kamaria and then Shanta.

Kamaria Brisseau:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

All right. Thank you, everyone. And then up next, we have the monthly trustee individual goal setting review. That is a lot of words. So basically, this is the part where one board member shares what they've personally been working on and what just interesting areas of development or projects they've undertaken for themselves in relation to what we do on the board and what they do individually. And so this month, Ellen is going to share with us what she's been thinking about. Take it away, Ellen.

Ellen Chen:

Thanks, Jessie. A lot of talking time today, huh? So I've got two personal goals as a board member here. One is I am extremely interested to see how this new method of learning and teaching develop. So I really want to get into how the instructors are responding, reacting, learning, and how the students are adapting and evolving basically into their own critical thinking process. So that is from the education perspective side.

Ellen Chen:

And also I'm extremely interested in helping Aluta with the fundraising part as well. I know that years past, I've been bugging Aaron. I'll be like, "When and how should we begin to think about fundraising? We can't just base our finances from the DOE if we want to do a lot more great projects, right?" Personally, I am reaching out to my network [inaudible 00:36:10] consists a lot of very generous donors as well as talking to people who have been doing fundraising for quite some time.

Ellen Chen:

And as the next goal, I am going to take some classes. I signed up for Skillshare; haven't really been using it as efficiently as I had hoped. So I will be teaching myself the processes and how to really wrap my mind around messaging to potential donors how I want to present the school to them to get them interested in our kids. I think that this is a great opportunity for all of us to really learn a very important skill as to how to raise money. So that is what I'll be working on. How is that, Jessie?

Jessica Boulet:

That was awesome. Thanks, Ellen.

Ellen Chen:

Yeah, sure.

Jessica Boulet:

That's really interesting. You'll have to tell us how the Skillshare goes.

Ellen Chen:

Oh, definitely will, definitely will.

Jessica Boulet:

The fun tool.

Ellen Chen:

Yeah.

Jessica Boulet:

All right, cool. And I believe that covers that part of the agenda. But I believe next up, I'm trying to pull up the agenda, is the Open Meeting Law audit review. Yeah. So I didn't know, Melissa and Kisha, if you were going to present anything about your experience with that if that's this part.

Melissa Alston:

Sure. Kisha, can you present?

Kisha Perez:

Yes.

Jessica Boulet:

And then I'll also say something but whatever order you think is better is fine with me.

Malik Russell:

Jessica, if you could start with just an overview of like a little context of what it is before we get into the portion, that would be great.

Jessica Boulet:

Yes. Thank you. That's a great idea. All right. So as you all know, what we've been trying to do is put together just general overview of check in with ourselves about how we're doing an Open Meeting Law, what are processes look like, also just like a yearly re-familiarization with what we do and how we do it, and then just take a look at ourselves and seeing how consistent are we about this, how aware are we of all the moving parts at all times. And so in order to do that, we put together a list of questions for everybody. And as you know, all of you filled out a self-assessment of certain aspects of Open Meeting Law and how it applies generally to trustees. Committee chairs did an extra one with respect to their responsibilities on their committees.

Jessica Boulet:

And then Melissa and Kisha worked with Susan to go through, well, largely did it themselves. But Susan also helped us out in just going through a bunch of different points of what Open Meeting Law compliance means. And so this was meant to be... It's the first go-around so it's like the pilot. And now that we've gotten all those answers and we've had a chance to digest them, I'm looking forward to hearing a little bit from Kisha about how this all went on the staff side. And the other half of that is that we'll all be thinking critically about how this went and how we'll iterate it next year because I think it is something that we will want to do on an annual basis. I hope that's a good summary and made sense.

Malik Russell:

Yeah. I think that's great. I think [inaudible 00:40:42] a little bit just like why this is important that we're doing it and why we want to make sure we're doing it every year. That would be great just to add a little piece.

Jessica Boulet:

Yeah. So Open Meeting Law, as we all know, it's the legal framework that keeps us accountable to the public as we are volunteers that are trying to do a public service here on the board. And governance of Nuasin is something that we are trying to give to the community. And so Open Meeting Law is what ensures that we're accountable to the public. So big picture framework that's why it's really important that we make sure that we're doing this. And it's also just a lot of little moving parts that can slip out view if you're not doing an annual touch base and saying, "Am I doing this right? How are we doing?" So that's the 100,000-foot view.

Malik Russell:

Thank you, Jessica. I appreciate that. And then Melissa and Kisha, can you guys walk us through how we are?

Kisha Perez:

Yes. Good evening, everyone. So right what you see here separated by colors are the buckets that we looked more into information of. So you can see public notice and agenda if they were properly posted in advance for the public. We usually put everything outside especially when you come in front of the building. We have our little section there that shows it to the public what time, what location when the board meeting does take place. So we are really good at that.

Kisha Perez:

We also, if you see in the orange, is the quorum for the meetings. Everyone does RSVP if they're coming in or not. And attendance for each meeting starting from July 2021 to December 2021, we have had quorum so that is great.

Kisha Perez:

In the green, you will see voting. If you see here, everything is yes. We have always properly voted for every single thing that we have done including materials that we have placed in the public portal, materials that we put up that show any of information from the school. We have had yes from July to December.

Kisha Perez:

For recordkeeping, this goes for the minutes. To be honest, I was not aware of the deadline. So you're supposed to post the meeting, the minutes, a week after the meeting has been taken place. I was not aware of that so I can be honest. I had put no but moving forward, the meetings will be public as soon as I edit them. I thought that you could edit them before the meeting to approve. But now, I know that it gives you a week deadline. If you can see a little arrow here, I already did for January so we're set for January 2021. It has already been public and posted and we have been on time.

Kisha Perez:

There was no information really on video recording or transcript. But everyone can look into the public portal and you can see all the meetings from July to December. The minutes are there, the transcript, and there's also the recording of the meetings. Everyone is able to see that.

Kisha Perez:

And then lastly, for the red, it's procedures and accountability. We had a little difficulty figuring out what this meant like especially the... Where was it? Are there any clear procedures and accountability since? I said, "No," for most of the recordkeeping. I said, "No," for procedures and accountability only because there was also no deadline for that on the document so I had put no. But now, for January, it will say yes because now I am aware of the deadlines.

Kisha Perez:

So moving on forward, I plan to do this every month just so that we can keep up-to-date for all this information. I also have partnered up with Board On Track. They have been really helpful, the customer service. And they are able to pull reports from 2016 up to now. So any reports that we do need that comes up to this, they're able to do it for us. They didn't really have a report of the public notices, but they're working on a report for me now. So that way, moving forward, we also have that report as well.

Kisha Perez:

And the last thing we're going to work on which is something that came up in the protocols was for us to put up our own protocols for the board meetings on our website. So I am working on that as well to be able to put up for next month. That is my audit. Any questions? No? Thank you.

Jessica Boulet:

This is awesome. Thank you, Kisha. And thanks for walking us through. This is really cool. I've seen this document before, but this is the first time I get to hear it all together so that's lovely. And thank you also just for staying on top of this generally.

Kisha Perez:

That's good.

Jessica Boulet:

Little caveat, I'll just say because it also applies to committee chairs is that I believe the one-week deadline is if you have executive session. So the one-week deadline is actually a best practice just because then we're covered in all circumstances. So that's why that was on that list, I believe.

Jessica Boulet:

So if no one else has any other follow-up questions, I will go ahead and share my screen so that we can all take a quick look at the results of our self-assessments as individual trustees.

Jessica Boulet:

Okay. All right. Can everyone see that? Awesome.

Kisha Perez:

Yup.

Jessica Boulet:

I don't know. I always have a lot of self-doubt about whether I'm screen-sharing correctly. I don't know why. Okay. So basically, I'm just going to take you through these pie charts really quickly just so we can all have a quick glimpse of how we're doing as a board. And then there's just a couple highlights I'll call out. And then there was one or two questions that came up that I think everybody can get some use out of. I'll just review them real quick. And then finally, we'll do next steps so that's overall.

Jessica Boulet:

So this is part one, looking at quorum. This is attendance. As we can see, this is not really a strong suit of ours in terms of what we want to see is 100% of people 100% of the time going to all the meetings. As Susan was very rigorous and insisting to me, she's like, "Why are you saying 11? It should be 12." Board On Track suggests 10 but overall, I think what we're thinking like what the thought is behind this question is that if you're participating in 11 meetings out of a year in the board in your committee, then you're probably contributing. That's like 10 sure or maybe but we don't meet that often. It's a mark of like, are we contributing and are all of us making sure that at every meeting we have a quorum to take the actions that compose board responsibilities that enable us to do our job essentially?

Jessica Boulet:

There's RSVPs make Melissa's life easier. So we have a little bit of work to do there. Reviewing of materials, this is just a check with yourself. Everyone says they reviewed them most of the time, but that's something I think probably I guess 45% of us cannot do better but I could do better. I will do better and so that's something to keep in mind.

Jessica Boulet:

Executive session. This was where... Just brief refresher on this, basically, when we call executive session, we're just talking about the topic that we called executive session about. That's all that this question means. So if we're in executive session and we're talking about, I don't know, what we had for dinner yesterday, technically, not a best practice because we certainly can't be talking about any public issues in executive session. That all has to be out in front of public. I think we're mostly compliant with that but review point.

Jessica Boulet:

Do I have a clear understanding of the requirements of confidentiality? We feel good about this. We got some really cool website review, comments. We'll be taking a look at that a little bit more closely in governance committee and seeing what we can do with that. But the first one, the first action item that we have is that basically, I'm going to be sending you all an email to ask for a short bio and a photo that

we can put up on the website and make the board a little bit more approachable on our website. And that was a very clear consensus item for all of us that that would be a nice thing to do.

Jessica Boulet:

And then finally, people just put up a couple questions that they had, comments, really appreciated all of this. And so just to answer this, I think the ethical violation question is probably kind of... Basically, we have ethical guidelines that we follow. We have Open Meeting Law guidelines that we follow and then we have items in the bylaws that we follow, right?

Jessica Boulet:

Then just as a point of clarity, these are all things that we police ourselves on for the most part. And I assume this question, I think, for all of us is like, "What if I accidentally do something wrong? Basically, if something accidentally happens, correct it as soon as possible, bring it to attention of everybody who needs to know, and then it can be handled properly. But as a preventative measure, this kind of thing where we just look at. "Am I doing everything correctly every year when we have the forms that we fill in for conflict of interest every year?" That's the preventative measures that we take to make sure that it doesn't happen in the first place. I hope that answers the question.

Jessica Boulet:

And I think that that brings us to the end of the results of the survey and how we felt about it. I think really the main thing that came out is making sure that we are... And I know it's been like a very odd year with everybody moving around with the pandemic and situations have been changing and us being remote, but attendance is really just like the most fundamental part of making sure that we can get stuff done as a board and especially in committees as well. I think some committees had some real struggles with figuring that out. So we vote on the schedules for all board meeting at the beginning of every year. And generally speaking, that's just something we need to prioritize. And then committee meetings, if something's not working on a regular basis, you have to speak up. Things can be rescheduled. But generally speaking, that's probably the most fundamental piece where I think we can improve.

Malik Russell:

Thank you, Jessica. I want to add one piece to that. I think especially in light of what we did this weekend kind of like really evaluating ourselves, obviously, these are like small things. But I think this is actually part of our self-assessment and reflection. And as we go through it as a board, one thing I'm trying to preach is consistency throughout every aspect. So we don't [inaudible 00:53:13] from our families, from our students, from our teachers. As an organization, we all do this like be reflective. And so if participation is important and the same way you would think about like, "Hey, are people showing up to work? Are they doing what they need to do?" Then we need to make sure that we can get better at these other things. And so just make sure that we are being reflective of holding ourselves to the highest standard and getting better, not like self-flagellation or self-loathing but like truthfully being honest assessment of ourselves and utilizing that to get better.

Malik Russell:

And so that's, I think, something that all these self-evaluations is important. We could be dismissive and I don't want us to intensely analyze it, but let's be honest and get better. And so I think that's something that we're trying to do as an organization and literally, it starts at the top, right? And so if that makes sense. And so I appreciate that and I appreciate that with this whole self-assessment piece as well.

Malik Russell:

One thing I do want to do is, hey, I like the transparency around the bio. Maybe we should talk and just see like there's any things that we should talk about. If someone does reach out to a board member, what should we say, what should we not say in that context and just be thoughtful about that, so that it doesn't go off tracks. And I don't want people to have personal liability for anything. These are different concepts I thought about with that but I like that. I always like transparency so I appreciate that.

Jessica Boulet:

Yeah. And I know that's an issue that... Actually, I don't know, Aaron, if you want to say anything about that but [crosstalk 00:54:50]-

Aaron Bothner:

Yeah.

Jessica Boulet:

... the past is making sure that the communications go to the right place and that we act as one as a board. So definitely not new but definitely something not to lose sight of.

Aaron Bothner:

Yeah. So this is a great time and I think this actually... I lumped it under everything we're talking about. This is a good time to remind folks if you remember facts here onboarding and training is that importance and that fiduciary responsibility we all have to function as a unit and as one voice. And so I think the idea behind adding names and such to the website is so people actually know who board members are. A short bio personalizes somebody in a huge way. So I think that's the big intention behind something like that and behind personalizing board members. Generally speaking, we remind everybody if you are contacted by a member of the public, of course, you always respond cordially. I'm not worried about that at all but want to direct that whatever the communication is most likely want to direct it to the chair. So in this instance, myself and the executive director, Malik, so that it can get to the right place.

Aaron Bothner:

And then the obvious exception to that I'll state would be any sort of formal complaint that was being issued which would follow the complaint policy that can be found on the website.

Aaron Bothner:

So generally speaking, of course, we want to get to know members of the public and communicate and be friendly and so on and so forth. And otherwise, if you receive a comment from the member of the public, acknowledge that it's heard, but we have a fiduciary responsibility not to comment individually as board members. So good time to refresh on that. I have every bit of faith that everybody's aware of that and acted accordingly with this group of people, but good time to remind people that that is the way a board should function.

Aaron Bothner:

And the other thing I just wanted to personally say is we set out this year as a priority to get folks a lot more comfortable with Open Meeting Laws. And so Jessica, Malik, and Melissa, Kisha, the whole

operations team have worked rather extensively, I think, to support the board in doing that. I talk about this a lot abstractly, but it's one of those things that we all really believe. We, I think, are all here to build an institution that will be here for decades beyond any of us individually because that's what our students deserve.

Aaron Bothner:

And this is one of those little things that when somebody, if you imagine this organization without the specific people and somebody steps into it to know that a board has done this audit annually, worked in close partnership with the senior leadership to make sure all the T's are crossed and I's are dotted, it makes a big statement about the quality and the rigor of the institution. And so I know that for most of us besides Jessica, it's probably not that exhilarating to do. It really, really sends a strong message that we take it seriously and that we're honest with ourselves and everything that everybody says. So I just want to say, to me, there's a very deep why here, of why we do this. I'm glad everyone took it seriously and dove in so that we set a strong precedent here. And I want to thank everyone who worked on the day to day of it for all your efforts on it. It's a big deal and it's an important thing for us to do so thank you.

Jessica Boulet:

Thanks, Aaron. Yeah. Did anybody have questions or thoughts that they want to share right now? And then I'll just put a cap on it.

Jessica Boulet:

Okay. Yeah. So again, you will be hearing from me with regard to photos and short bios. I'll put together an example. And then the other thing you'll be hearing from me and that will be putting together in the next month is basically turning this type of thing into a short little guide to like, "What are my OML duties again?" And just like bullet points especially for committee chairs. There's some questions that came up that you'll be getting emails on that also that I don't want to do in full board. So that's it.

Malik Russell:

I think we have more so, do we now... Here with the agenda back up real quick. Thank you.

Malik Russell:

So I'm going to have Latoya launch the Nuasin Lactation Policy approval portion of it just as like a context before Latoya gets into it. This is one of those things that we have to make sure that we have, has been vetted by legal and... Hey, there's more progressive things we might want to do. But right now, we want to make sure we have a really strong policy that obviously addresses the issue and so this is... I think we've talked in the past about some of our policies. We're making [inaudible 01:00:32] who we are right now. This is one that we're trying to make sure that we are getting it right and providing and being compliant with what we need to do as an industry and we know that is the case. And so Latoya, I'll let you take it from here.

Latoya Hart:

Thank you, Mr. Russell. Good evening, everybody. I'm just going to give everyone a preliminary overview of pretty much what this policy is all about. So the purpose of this policy is to grant mothers the opportunity to lactate during working hours. Within the policy, it basically describes the space we'll be

utilizing. We'll be using a multi-purpose room. This room will be used for both lactating and as a regular or office space. But of course, when the mother is in this space lactating, we're making sure that we're following all protocols. Doors is locked. There's a sign on the door if the mother feels comfortable with that.

Latoya Hart:

This policy just gives mothers the right to feel supported and comfortable within the workspace. And that's what we always want to provide here at Nuasin Next Generation Charter School. So that's pretty much what this policy is all about. Any questions, comments, concerns?

Malik Russell:

Okay. Well, there's no questions. Jessica, can you initiate a vote for the policy?

Jessica Boulet:

Absolutely. I'll also add that this is a fairly special law for us for New Yorkers that they don't have everywhere in the country. So it's cool that we have this in case anybody was wondering,

Malik Russell:

Absolutely. And I do appreciate that, Jessica. Thank you for mentioning that. That's important.

Jessica Boulet:

Yeah. So it's exciting that we have this at all. So I moved to approve which means I'm also an aye.

Kamaria Brisseau:

Second. I'm an aye.

Aaron Bothner:

[inaudible 01:02:33]

Jessica Boulet:

Wait. Was that Kamaria?

Kamaria Brisseau:

Yes, that was Kamaria.

Jessica Boulet:

Thanks, Kamaria. Okay. And then Aaron?

Aaron Bothner:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Sophia?

Sophia Huda:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Tim?

Tim Bryan:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Ellen?

Ellen Chen:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Aluta?

Aluta Khanyile:

Aye.

Jessica Boulet:

Did I miss anybody? Good. All right.

Tim Bryan:

Thanks, babe.

Malik Russell:

Okay, great. We're going to act like the board's flywheel issue is not an issue. We'll talk offline about how to get that right, have the discussion about deadlines and consistency. But you know, everybody's busy so I understand but really, we're fine. So Jessica, do you have an update on the board flywheel?

Jessica Boulet:

Only that we revisited the discussion in governance committee. Generally, there was a sentiment that it was really cool and we do want to finish it. And the next step is just figuring out when that happens in everybody's busy schedules.

Malik Russell:

Understood. Also, I appreciate it. I'm glad you guys enjoyed the process. We look forward to hear more about it.

Aaron Bothner:

I think to get this done, we should pick a point person to really sit down and digest and probably work through this. Maybe put together a working group at their discretion, but I would say we want to do that as a board to Malik's point to make sure this gets done. Did that happen in governance committee or do we want to just pick that person now or who's going to raise their hand?

Jessica Boulet:

If anybody wants to immediately raise their hand, please go ahead but know... I think really we did just identify basically the next step is figuring out when and how this happens. I suppose there could be a smaller group that puts it together. I could always just send something out and see who's interested in working on this, on working this toward completion, and we could take it from there.

Aaron Bothner:

I'm... And I'm probably going to regret doing this, but I'm actually okay taking a stab at it if nobody else is chomping at the bit. I just [crosstalk 01:05:19]-

Malik Russell:

I think Tim was chomping for sure. Tim was definitely chomping.

Aaron Bothner:

I sense that. Well, I appreciated his little contribution at the meeting on this so I wanted to let him go. No, but I'm fine to take a stab at least concepting it and then we can wordsmith and finalize it if everyone's good with that.

Jessica Boulet:

Yeah. I think the only question is if other people want to participate at that stage at the putting-together stage initially.

Aaron Bothner:

That's the official name of the stage too.

Ellen Chen:

I can help with that, Aaron. Want a sidekick?

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. Great. Perfect. [crosstalk 01:06:09].

Jessica Boulet:

I also want too by the way. That was absolutely an entree for me saying I'm one of those people

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. I'll tell you what. I'm going to let you two run with it then. I would take it [inaudible 01:06:23]. I'll take a look once you've had a chance to pull something holistically together.

Malik Russell:

The passive-aggressive interplay is for [inaudible 01:06:34]. I love all of it.

Jessica Boulet:

[crosstalk 01:06:36] too. It was strategic.

Malik Russell:

That's really good. All of it is great. No matter what it is, it's really lovely. It is great. I like it. And definitely telling [crosstalk 01:06:51].

Aaron Bothner:

I didn't know if I'm not-

Malik Russell:

Hey, Aaron, if I can do it myself, I'm going to do it. I would love for you all do it. Okay, you guys do it then I'll look at it. I love cooperation.

Aaron Bothner:

Listen, listen. We all know it, as leaders in education, that sometimes she's just got to trick other people into committing to. So thanks [Kathy 01:00:07:14] and Ellen. You played right into what I was going for.

Ellen Chen:

Clever, clever man.

Aaron Bothner:

No. I'm happy to help if needed, but you two are great. Okay. I'll stop talking.

Malik Russell:

Hey, Jessica, we're good with governance. Is the agenda back up? .

Melissa Alston:

I actually closed it because we were done.

Malik Russell:

Oh, so... Hey, that's what I wanted to be at four minutes past what I wanted to be at. It would be an hour exactly. Four minutes past that but appreciate everybody's focus and getting it done. And I really do appreciate us. I feel like in this hour we're very productive so thank you for participating. Thank you for being focused and thanks for that. And then Aaron, as I know that you don't allow people to have last words, I'm going to let you close this out.

Aaron Bothner:

Speaking of passive-aggressive, damn.

Malik Russell:

Well, that was aggressive, a little passive.

Aaron Bothner:

So first, I appreciate everyone's grace with my last minute change of schedule and stepping in and getting us going so thank you. Secondly, just want to thank everybody again for Saturday. It's great to come away from something like that feeling more and more positive as time passes. So I thought it was a great day for all of us to be there. And again, thanks to school leadership for doing a thorough and detailed job putting that together. It's a lot of work. Otherwise, we've got longer this month because of how early this board meeting falls. So if you need anything, don't hesitate to give me a call. I'll turn it back over to Malik for the last words.

Malik Russell:

That's called passive-aggressive. Again, thanks everybody. I appreciate it. This meeting is now adjourned and everybody have a great night and enjoy your one-hour long after eight hours of retreat evening. So it's kind of both hands but thanks again for everybody. I really appreciate the participation and the support and organization and like the direction that we're going. That's great so thank you so much.

Jessica Boulet:

Thank you so much. Have a good night.

Melissa Alston:

Goodnight.

Aaron Bothner:

Thank you, everybody.

Aluta Khanyile:

Wishing everybody goodnight.