

Malik Russell:

Bonjour Kurt. How are you? Nice t-shirt.

Kurt Davidson:

I was told it was a twin day. And is Kisha joining in? We're going triplets.

Kisha Perez:

It's actually going to be quintuplets because Melissa has hers on too.

Malik Russell:

Oh, she better have it on. That's right.

Kisha Perez:

Yes. Yes.

Malik Russell:

Did you guys give one to Mr. Brown? I just want to make him look bad. That's fine. First board meeting, look bad.

Kisha Perez:

Oh my God.

Melissa Alston:

He told me he was going to wear three piece suit.

Kisha Perez:

Yes, Mr. Brown.

Malik Russell:

I like it. You know what? I also like you taking it from work because you need to do that. That makes sense. That's how that interim word works. I like it.

Shanta Pressley:

Where's my shirt?

Kurt Davidson:

I was waiting for Shanta to say something.

Malik Russell:

It's at the school.

Kurt Davidson:

We'll hand one to you.

Malik Russell:

I'm still waiting for my wings from. I ain't got no food from the food truck.

Shanta Pressley:

No worries. It's coming.

Malik Russell:

Yeah, here we go. Worst statement of all time, "Don't worry. It's coming. Don't bother me about it, just believe it's going to happen." That's great.

Shanta Pressley:

Exactly. It's the growth-

Malik Russell:

[crosstalk 00:08:30]

Shanta Pressley:

-growth in the process.

Aaron Bothner:

I went with an off color red sweater just to be kind of close to you guys, but just not quite exactly right.

Malik Russell:

So your background so interestingly makes it ... the one thing you have in it makes it look so blank. It's almost as if you had nothing in the background. You're like, "Oh, there's nothing there." Oh wow. There's nothing there because there's one thing there. I'm going to take a picture. I'm going to get you a picture and put right behind you and me. That'd be great.

Aaron Bothner:

I was actually supposed to get artwork in here now that you remind me.

Malik Russell:

They definitely did not give you that.

Shanta Pressley:

No, no. And not only that, this is the only place I can put the coat rack for reasons that I won't go into.

Malik Russell:

So hold on a second. So my daughter had something to ask me that's really important so I wanted her tell me what happened.

Daisy:

So Georgie pushed me in and Georgie got on my eyes so can I have ice on it?

Malik Russell:

No ice, but tell Georgie don't do that. Okay? Can you guys play nice? Alright. Give me a kiss. Say bye-bye. Lovely. Alright. I know, but I have to do work stuff. So go ahead. Close the door please. Daisy, stop playing around. Go ahead, go ahead.

Aaron Bothner:

If she needs, we can add an agenda item for her.

Malik Russell:

There's an ice on the eye agenda item. Daisy, can you close the door please? Hit me twice. Right? Then just leave the door open. So yeah, that's leaving the door open. Very smart girl. Anuj, what's that? You look more like Basquiat hip hop tonight. White background, backwards hat on, a little hip going on here. I don't know what's going on.

Anuj Khatiwada:

The backwards hat, it's a staple.

Malik Russell:

A staple, great.

Anuj Khatiwada:

It's a staple. I actually think I had it on forward, but I knew you were going to say something so I flipped it back just to make sure. And I still catch flack.

Malik Russell:

I think the background is what's throwing me off. It's like a whole like-

Anuj Khatiwada:

Should we change it?

Malik Russell:

I'm going to have a Netflix concept about my narcissistic fall really soon.

Anuj Khatiwada:

It's actually kind of messy back there and I've been interviewing all day and I was like, "Alright. Are people really going to want to work for us if I have that mess back there?" So I put this nice background on. It's clean, it's easy to see, it's easy to read. Yeah, that's my story today.

Malik Russell:

I appreciate that. So I was giving people time. I believe we had ... I know people have conflicts today, but wanted to make sure we still get on in a timely way. And so today we'll start now, and if anybody it adds that's great. Hey, Sophie. How you doing Sophie? Good to see you. And so we'll get started and as always excited, but mostly excited today because I see a yellow hat and backwards on Rebecca.

Awesome. Alright. And so let's get started now. Melissa, I'll share the screen with you. Well, I guess we're all screening together, but you get my point.

Alright, great. Can you make that a little bit bigger Melissa? Thank you. Thank you, appreciate that. So as always we'll start with recording attendance and guests, and then Erin you'll call the meeting to order, and then we'll go through the agenda quickly, and then we'll have reflections. It's going to be a little different today. I'm going to kind of guide us through our reflection. So we'll start with the attendance, Kisha.

Kisha Perez:

I already took attendance.

Malik Russell:

Okay. Well, I guess I'll take that off for my agenda.

Kisha Perez:

Yes.

Malik Russell:

Always got to be so mean that way. And then it's now to you, Aaron.

Aaron Bothner:

Alright. So I officially call the meeting to order. We're good with quorum, right? Sorry, I didn't count the-

Kisha Perez:

Yes, we are.

Aaron Bothner:

Yep. Okay. So given that, I officially call the meeting to order at 6:41 PM on March 24th.

I'm going to highlight a few items in the agenda tonight. Otherwise, everything is as usual here. The main things that I think we need to accomplish this evening are number one, digesting any of the school updates from any of our leadership that's on with us today, any key updates they have for us. In the finance committee, we are doing the vote for approval of the salary slate, I guess, for this year. We typically do this in March. I think everyone's accustomed to this at this point, but we typically do this in March each year so that school leadership can work with staff on their return letters. The budget is on track and the final approval of that will likely be in, I believe, April and May. So that's the big one there.

And then for committee updates, we have a quarterly committee update slated. What I would say to committee chairs here is, if there's anything pertinent that you really want to touch on and you want folks to hear about as we head into the last quarter of the year where committees will be spending most of their time planning and getting ready to tee up next year, please do so. Otherwise, let's try to move through these relatively quickly because we actually have a fairly stacked agenda tonight.

Under governance, the main piece year is going to be the flywheel discussion, to wrap that up as follow up from our retreat and the February board meeting. And then we do have a couple items to discuss in executive session this evening. So that's the agenda. Again, I'll ask that if any information can

be discussed or shared offline, let's go ahead and make sure that we do that to make sure that we give full board attention to the key items tonight and we can really dig into those if we need to. Thank you.

Malik Russell:

Thanks Aaron, I appreciate that. And yeah, I think I'm going to utilize kind of some of the things that we are thinking about at the school during mastery season is we are going to be urgent, but thorough. Right? And so we want to be quick, but not rushed. We want to make sure that we are going through things in precise ways, but make sure we hit all the right things. So I appreciate that. Let's get started. So let's start. I want everybody to take a look at the mission. I want to give everybody 30 seconds to take a look and think about that. Okay, then can we take a quick look at the three pillars please as well? Alright, thanks a lot.

So today for the reflection portion, one, I just want us to think about the fact that there's a reason why we start with that portion of it. And then I sent everybody out an email I sent and I started with a quote that I think this time of year makes sense for us to really think about that. And so I'll start by giving everybody an opportunity to read the quote. I'll read it aloud and read it with me and then give people a chance, I'll let you know what resonates with me about the quote and if anyone has something to say, that's how we'll go into today. But of course, it always starts with our mission and our three pillars to start. So I started this quote because as we are going through mastery season, there's a ton of things going on. A lot of pushes and a lot of pressure, but there's also this great thing that's happened that we get a chance to take a step back and look at. And so this quote by Alice Walker really resonates with me, especially during this time in New Austin's growth.

"Growth. Some periods of our growth are so confusing that we don't even recognize that growth is happening. We may feel hostile or angry or weepy and hysterical, or we may feel depressed. It would never occur to us, unless we stumbled on a book or a person who explained to us, that we were in fact in the process of change, of actually becoming larger than we were before. Whenever we grow, we tend to feel it, as a young seed must feel the weight and inertia of the earth as it seeks to break out of its shell on its way to becoming a plant. Often the feeling is anything but pleasant. But what is most unpleasant is the not knowing what is happening. Those long periods when something inside ourselves seems to be waiting, holding its breath, unsure about what the next step should be, eventually become the periods we wait for, for it is in those periods that we realize that we are being prepared for the next phase of our life and that, in all probability, a new level of our personality is about to be revealed."

And so, for me personally, I grounded this work that we do and this space that we are in our kind of evolution in this quote. And it is because a lot of times we don't remember how we got here, but we are here. Every moment, second, time, influence, quote, conversation, upsetness that we had, got us to this place. And I think that we need to be kind of understanding that we are in that process of that change and all the work that you've done every day, every kind of feeling you've had in that moment, has gotten us here. And we need to appreciate that as a community, as people, as people invested in what we are doing. We are rooted in our pillars and our mission, but we are growing and changing every day. And every day is so important for where we are now.

And so that's a lot of heft on our moment to moment, but it also is a lot of belief in our moment to moment. And so we need to believe every moment we have is important going forward, because every moment we've had has been important in the past. And so I appreciate the growth and the amount of change and strength it takes to hold that, but also appreciate the opportunity to see what we grow into. That was my reflection today as something that just resonated with me. Anyone have any thoughts about the quote or the sentiment? I know I said a lot of words, which went against my preamble.

Ellen:

This is a lovely quote, and I will be the first to admit that I need some time to kind of digest as a whole. So thank you very much for sharing this. Yeah, it's going to resonate.

Shanta Pressley:

This was the first thing I read this morning when I woke up, and it was really personable to me at this point in my life. I thank you for sharing the growth within the school, but the part of the quote that really hit home for me is about the sixth sentence down, and I'm going to read it. "But what is most unpleasant is the not knowing what is happening. Those long periods when something inside ourselves seems to be waiting, holding its breath, unsure about what the next step should be, eventually becomes the period we all are waiting for." I am definitely in that space right now. So this was ... this one I took the time to reread this several times and meditate on it. So I thank you for sharing it, and I would like to applaud you all for the growth that's being done within the school. Because I know it's not easy. And to you Malik, thank you for showing it because as the teachers and the leaderships are there, they may not see it all the time. So kudos to you guys. Thank you.

Malik Russell:

Thank you. I appreciate everybody for sharing that. With all things, take it in, take a chance, and we always need to be reflective of what we do and what we're doing is really important. So thank you. So then we will now begin.

So we'll start with the school update now. We'll go through, also want to add that Mr. Anthony Brown is on as the Interim Principal for the high school, and he will also be part of this update as well. Want to give everybody the opportunity to give Mr. Brown a hardy welcome and a good ... I always call it the old school ... if you ever watch the show Fat Albert, they go, "Yeah. Yeah."

Shanta Pressley:

"Hey, hey, hey." Oh, no?

Malik Russell:

Welcome Mr. Brown. Everybody should say that. Everybody say welcome Mr. Brown. Let's go all at one time. 1, 2, 3.

Shanta Pressley:

Welcome Mr. Brown. [crosstalk 00:25:01]

Kisha Perez:

Welcome Mr. Brown.

Anthony Brown:

Thank you.

Malik Russell:

I want you to know our kindergartens are much better at getting it together than you guys, but great effort. Appreciate it. Alright. So thanks a lot.

Anthony Brown:

Wait. Who is Dr. Brown? That was a joke.

Malik Russell:

Anuj definitely played your part, appreciate it. Thank you. All right. So I'll get started with my part and we'll keep going from there. Alright, thank you.

So we'll start with the attendance update. So we are still at 90%, and just so you know that is below our goal. We want that goal to be 95%. We aren't there yet. We are seeing movement in the high school, and I think that we are creating a place that's positive for the lower school when people are coming in. We see a lot of fighting a pandemic, and there's just a lot more things are happening in people's lives than they were before. So I feel we're going in the right direction as a community, but we're still trying to figure out what's happening on a day-to-day basis. From a staff level, kind of similar. We are at 91% actual. Again, I think we are making a bigger space where people want to be in and are coming in, but we're still dealing with lots of one-offs. And so we keep folks in that because, anyone that watches ESPN and sports, the best ability is availability. That means we want everybody here and in the building as much as possible.

Next we'll get started with the college readiness. As I said, I do believe one of the biggest things we've done is this college readiness concept. So we have 100% of our scholars have applied to at least six colleges. We're now in the proportion of making sure 100% of our scholars are getting into school, and that's a bigger, different push. 36 have been accepted into a school that's either two or four year. We want to make we get 100% of that, and we're really pushing for that. We've been offered over \$3.1 million in merit-based scholarship and need-based scholarship. That's a huge deal for us. And one of the biggest hurdles we have to get over is making sure that every single kid is able to go to school and feels comfortable to go to school financially. So both the ability and capability to do well and thrive, but also the financial support to do that. So we really are focused on that as well.

And we are on track for 100% graduation rate. We are also pushing to make sure that graduation from New Austin is a big deal. It means something, it means you accomplished something. And so not only do you want people to graduate, we want that graduation to mean something. You want it to mean that if a New Austin student goes and sees Aaron at his commercial real estate place and wants a job, you know that person is ready to go and has done and has the intellectual capability, the critical thinking, and the foundation to be a great part of your community. And so I am focusing on the graduation rate, but I'm also focused on what does graduating New Austin mean. What does it mean about the person that goes through that?

Next. So as part of this, we are going through multiple things and we're trying to get better, and we really are focused on getting better and making sure that like, "Hey, our college readiness team is really focused on seniors, but we're starting to look at other things as well." So we have college trips that we've really focused on and are pushing through not only our seniors, but our juniors, making sure they get that. Making sure that all of our students are taking SATs and getting ready for that and understand how important that test is. Right now, just to be totally honest in the world, it's a different place. But because some schools are looking at it, some schools are not looking at it, we want to make sure that regardless of how people are looking, we're doing everything to make sure that we're focused on that.

And then our summer and fall plans, we have scholars that are really focused for getting college prep and we are trying to get them into different programs, the Queensbury program is one. And really focusing on making sure our scholars understand and are being highlighted for what they do. And so our

summer and fall plans is making sure that we get applications for kids to go through these programs, apply for these different scholarships, apply for this notoriety and get that.

You can go next. Year preview. So as we kind of go through this year, I just want to kind of focus on where we are and what we are thinking about. And so as we finish out March one important date, this is not on here, the Wednesday ... so we have the 29th and 30th, our state test, which is what we have mastery season around, what we are focused on. The entire school is motivated towards this priority. It does not mean that it's our end game, but it is an important assessment and we want to make sure we embrace that. And so we are focused on that from three through eight, but also the entire New Austin organization is focused on making sure that we do well on the state test and that our students get everything they need to do well on that time. Simultaneously, we also have the SUNY Oneonta visit, which is great. State schools also have deep pockets for financial support, we want to make sure we have strong relations there.

As we move to April, we continue mastery season and we get a chance to really put our foot down on the math state tests. Kurt started already doing a tremendous amount to get involved in that space. We also have other visits, and as community leadership wise, we are definitely looking forward to how we are going to finish out the year as well as going in to next year. So then as we move to May, we are going to the ELA AP exams. We have that, which will be great. We have the end of year trip, our St. John's University visit. But as a space ... Go to another room please. Thank you. Sorry, Judge wanted to come in. I told him not to.

As a space, that is for the leadership group. We're going to do a ton of visits at other schools and start to really make sure that we are rooting ourselves in best practices, learning about what we want to do, and making sure that our summer slash next year plans are really the best they possibly can be. And so this is a good space for us for growth. We are also looking for our teachers and our students to grow. We've had this mastery space, we want to make sure that students are taking that and taking that independence and starting to really truly develop themselves in an incremental level intellectually. And so that's why it's called leadership development month, because we are focused on what are the best practices, reflecting on what we've done, how we do better.

Then in June, end of the year, we have Regents exams. And so Mr. Brown will talk about how we're ramping up on mastery for that. We have end of year kind of trips. One of the big things that we are going to focus on this year is that we are going to finish strong, and so the finish strong concept means that we are sprinting through the end line. We are not hobbling up to it, and so we want to make sure that every single day is important to us and that when we hit that last day of school, it's not an end period, but just another space that we broke through because we're going to next year. And so we are really trying to finish strong and try to push that all the way through, and that's kind of our end of the year concept. We've set a good basis for our mastery. We want to make sure we continue that, we want to make sure that we are growing and looking to the future, but also being present and making sure that we are finishing strong.

Next slide please.

PART 1 OF 8 ENDS [00:35:04]

Malik Russell:

All right. So that is my ending point today. And then, I will now pass this over to the illustrious Kurt Davidson.

Kurt Davidson:

Great. So you went 15 minutes under, that means I have to be proportional. Don't I? Yes, no. Okay. All right. I would love to jump right on in.

For those of you on the ed committee call last week, this is the exact same presentation. I'll go a little more broadly throughout this presentation, then obviously, if there's any questions that we want to go in more depth to, we did dive really deep in ed committee.

But if there's something else you want to really dive into, as we look at the numbers for our past IAs and the work that we've been doing over the course of the past several months, but particularly with mastery over the past six weeks, please feel free to jump in, interrupt me, throw the chat, whatever works for you all. So, Melissa.

All right. I always want to start off with our goals. These are the slide I've been giving staff all year, pretty much every single presentation we share out.

Just the thing I want to stamp for everyone on the call, is the last question around, believing this is achievable or not. If we do not believe we can get there, why are we here?

A lot of our work over the past few weeks, and not just been on the pragmatics and the very specific skills we've been developing with teachers, and with students, and strategies has really been on the softer side with our staff, building that belief and mindset. That is ongoing work.

That is work that we're only doing over time. And we have to have folks in place in the building, who truly believe that our kids can reach the high levels, and can reach the high levels in a quick way.

All right, Melissa. All right. So here is our IA data. The update from the ed committee call is the mock data, in here. We have given three IAs throughout the year. IA1, October, IA2, December IA3, February, and the mock was last Friday.

As chair in ed committee meeting in both the ELA and math, our IA3 did definitely not meet our expectations. Obviously anything that's under the 80% mark, is not meeting our expectations or our goal.

However, we did see a dip in a few grade levels in February, and we've spent a lot of time over the course of the past few weeks, really diagnosing what may have been the cause of that. And I'll go into that in just a moment.

But I did want to give a chance for everyone to take a look at where we are as of this last Friday; where we did give a four passage long assessment on Friday, and did not provide additional time outside of the 8:30 to 12:30 time period, that we did provide students in place.

And I think a couple of things that we just want to know is, when it comes to the mock, with eighth grade specifically, Malik and I have been talking a lot about this, that we've seen consistent performance throughout the year.

And a lot of it is with eighth graders, and that part of that, that senior, either they're holding their fire for the real game next week. We're confident that throughout the work habits, that last Friday, we're still on track with eighth grade, to be where we want to be.

There would not be a dramatic drop here. And also, if you look the overall percentage, we should not drop significantly with eighth grade. However, the percentage of students who hit our pass mark did.

And the reason behind that is, we have a ton of students who are at 72%, or 69 and 72% were two of the most common scores, meaning they did not meet the pass mark, but were right below, and we're confident there.

Where we're seeing promise and I think where I'm most excited about, is looking where we are with third grade. We've seen this common progression throughout the year. I think I mentioned this at the retreat with our students, that, across the country are the last year, that our third graders, had a full gear of school, in-person.

This school year, uninterrupted school was their kindergarten year. First grade, in March, we went out. Second grade, last year was major interruptions on and off, hybrid, many students completely remote.

And third grade, they come in and all of a sudden you have that bar of third grade hitting them. So we're really proud of the work and progress we've been doing in third grade, to get our kids to where they need to be. Obviously, still a long way's to go, but we're seeing a lot of progress with the habits. All right, Melissa.

So one of the first areas we wanted to share there, is where we saw not what we wanted to see. So I'll share this with both ELA and math.

And fourth grade was a grade level where we did underperform our expectations for our students, compared to where they were before, and compared to the habits we're seeing in class.

Some of the things that we did notice were the level of the text that we provided our students, and we did provide fairly rigorous texts. And I think with fourth grade, specifically, we started off with the most challenging text first.

Not the most exciting text, either. A lot of our students in domain specific language and lot of barriers get them started on the wrong foot there. Where the easiest passage was the last passage. So we did see some fatigue there.

However, we have been diving into what the habits of our scholars look like. And one of the things that we did notice with fourth grade, and a little bit with third grade as well, our students were going on the procedural route with things.

So they're playing the game of, "We're going to do the 50/50, the magic Navy." And that's very procedural in nature. We're going to try to slash a couple of the trash there, and then we got a 50/50 shot.

When indeed, if you're not using your thinking, if you're not using your dots, if you're not getting your ideas down on that paper and answering the question, 50/50 is just random. It's not mathematically 50% chance, if you're just circling a couple of things and picking 50/50.

So what we've been focused on specifically with all grades, but specifically third and fourth grade, is, students are getting their thinking on the paper next to their questions.

For example, this question, "What is the purpose of the section, 'Facing the challenge?'" Our expectation of kids are going back. They're looking at the jots from the text they made.

They're jotting their answer to the question. Because as we share with them, we believe they have good ideas, and they need to have their ideas presented aboard. And if they put their idea on the paper, that is going to put their...

If they have accurate main idea and they're able to really have done accurate jots throughout, they're able to put their thoughts on the paper.

They have a much higher chance to actually get the answer correct, and it's authentic to who they are and what they are truly learning as students as well. And it goes beyond the actual, just, function of the test that goes to their ideas. Go ahead.

And so, just quick debrief for the data. I touched on fourth grade, we assessed everywhere between the IA2 and IA3, and really, we spent a lot of time looking at every single assessment, particularly our students at the cusp.

Because those students last year may have gotten a level three on a low end, or last year got a level two, and are underperforming, where we want to be, or students who are overperforming where we expected them for this time of year, and really focused on those students and what they're doing in the text.

Our assessment were areas where we fell short is, as a mid fourth grade, there, I think in sixth grade, through observations in classrooms, a lot of the work has been teaching specifically to the text. We always remind teachers.

You have to mind a first year teacher in sixth grade all the time that, they're never going to see this same text again. Kids may read it, they may want to learn all about Trudy and her swimming, and dive deeper, but 90% of students are not going to be reading about Trudy again.

It's all about the transferable skills and what we're teaching them, so they can transfer that to another text and transfer that work there. And so, a lot of our coaching and support with this grade level has been on that.

What we are looking for that is not just sixth grade, but across the board. And then in seventh grade, you'll see in both those math and ELA, we're focusing with both the ELA, history, and math teachers, so all three of them, very much on letting go and allowing students to drive the discussion.

There's often a time where students within the practice, we've seen in the observations as students will, you will jump in, they'll go down the wrong track.

And then, rather than allowing students to really work it out and have that discussion with another, the teacher will intervene. And we've been working with all of the teachers as a team to get better at that. Can you go back? Awesome.

There we go. All right. Just a little snip of what we've been doing over the past few weeks. So this has been the time since we saw one another at the retreat.

We've been really working on elevating our plan. This week is week nine of mastery season, and our folks have been on the main idea. We have a belief to say, "If kids are able to ascertain what is the main idea, what is the literal meaning, deeper meaning of a certain text, what is the main idea and the lesson learned in certain texts, what's the author's point of view?"

If they're able to truly understand that and get that on paper, and we're focused on the transferable skills, we feel like that, not just for the purpose of testing but for the purpose of them understanding any text, that's put in front of them.

That is something that's really important and powerful. And so, we are tracking that. As you can see, our students have goal cards. We have daily debriefs where we're going through the data, we're celebrating growth.

I attended the math debrief, yesterday. I was with third and fourth grade, covering both math and ELA. These, we're going through on a daily basis. When students are doing mastery work, we are sharing data from that day with the entire team, doing quick celebrations of growth.

In math, one teacher will share student work from that day. And as a team, we'll quickly diagnose and look and see how we can help that teacher get better for tomorrow. And this, as you know, Malik, shares all the time. Part of mastery is quick elevation of practice in general. It's not just test prep.

It is elevation in a rapid nature of building teachers to become better teachers. And through these practices where day-to-day, we are in classrooms, the second picture on here is Ms. Ripple, our dean of humanities, her tracker for going into eighth grade.

And she he has target students. She's checking in it and coaching with on a single day. She's going through and doing instant item analysis based upon question type. Where we've worked with our consultant, Paloma, to build out what that looks like, and modeling that for our teachers, and doing that across the board, so their leaders are in the classroom.

When myself, Malik, go in classroom, we are in students texts, looking at how they're jotting, their quality main ideas, how they're annotating the questions and getting their jots down.

And we're looking at their goals, and we're giving them coaching based upon their goals. And you see goal cards up here; little heralds, it's a little raggedy.

But it's probably been in his backpack. In the picture, we want to make sure that kids are using both the ELA and math, knowing what their goal is for that week. So that's ELA.

Math, obviously we have a longer runway, and I think we saw overall flat lining middle of the year with math. There are a couple of exceptions in here that you'll see. Obviously, seventh grade is the one that stood out most to us for math.

With math, math is always hard. One thing that we've been working on as we're working on building our assessment practices is our interim assessments. We have to be much more cumulative in nature and spiral back old skills, so that we're having multiple measures of assessment there.

In the middle of the year, skills are pretty much universally. The standards that were assessed are among the hardest standards in the middle of the year. And we'll see that in just a second, as we illustrate with seventh grade, several of the problems that we gave students. So go ahead, Melissa.

And so, this is questions number 19 and 20 from the seventh grade IA. So this was the lowest performing question on the assessment, and then, I believe, the second or third highest performing question on the assessment.

I'll just give you a second to look and see. I also could be like Malik, I should have given it to you to do. Numbers 19, it's a lovely one. So hopefully I had to do this. Part of us raising the bar for our students, for our teachers, we're not throwing the easy stuff at them.

And I think, oftentimes that's something that Malik, and I, and Ms. White had to talk a lot about after this assessment. And that, on the state test, there are going to be questions like number 19 that are not just two step questions. There are multiple steps where you're having to do a lot of different steps in order to get to the actual answer.

But there are also questions that are much more straightforward as well. A reflective moment for us is, we needed to ensure that we have some more of those straightforward essay questions, so that we're able to ascertain better as to where students are having gaps. I think we're able to do that a little bit.

With number 20, which is still a multi-step question, but is much more accessible even though you have the decimals, along percents, and fractions. All in one, that is three different skills, and that's important.

We're seeing progress there and the kids are being exposed to the challenging questions. Go ahead. All right. I think

Malik Russell:

On the math piece...

Kurt Davidson:

Yeah. Go ahead, Malik.

Malik Russell:

I appreciate what you said there. Can you go back to that last slide? And it's also us. Me and Kurt really do talk about this a lot. Question 19 is a great question. It's just really convoluted and makes you think a lot, and it is difficult.

It doesn't test the exact standard. Number 20, it's also difficult. That's not really straightforward, but it just shows you the differentiation between questions. And one of the things that we know, is that we are giving all super rigorous questions.

And so, the scores that we are seeing, we're trying to figure out, what does that correlate to a state level? But also, we're trying to figure out, what's our personal internal level of mastery?

And so, we're going through that process now. So we give that one spot. Kurt, same thing as how the scores are going. But as an organization, we are thinking about what we want to assess, what's important to us, and how we want to assess it? That's more complicated than you might think. Sorry, go ahead, Kurt. I apologize.

Kurt Davidson:

No. I appreciate that. I know we spoke about this before. I'd much rather us air, on the side of providing things that are too challenging and rigorous, and bordering overly rigorous, than the opposite problem, where we're not giving kids enough challenge there as well.

All right. Just overall in math where we're seeing progress, I think we're seeing a lot of buy-in start in fifth grade with the my math plan. Broadly, we've talked a lot about this.

As we've been very much focused on the conceptual math throughout the entire school year, grade levels where we have seen the greatest embrace of the concept of number stories and discourse being at the heart of what we do, that's where we've seen the most growth.

It's fairly cut and dry there, where we've had a longer pathway to get there. And in teacher practice and building that, is where we've had more challenges.

If we're looking broadly, a lot of this concept around the conceptual math... I almost said new math. I'm breaking of that habit. But the conceptual math is where we're seeing that embrace, we're seeing that growth.

I'll also say, great thing with math, is, there can be movement with a lot of our students, somewhere with third grade, I mentioned.

Across the board, a lot of our students in math, we have not been spending the time on the foundations, and our students are having to catch up with that and build strategies and the different types of strategies that we are seeing.

I work with two different six grade groups every morning, and the percent problems in sixth grade, percent is tough. We have certain students who love double number lines; that we have certain students who really appreciate the use of the proportion.

Before teaching sixth grade, the double number line, I did not know what that was. I just did proportion, growing up. However, students really have conceptually understood that and it works for some of them.

We're able to compare the work side-by-side and see where they are, buying into the different strategies and different conceptual ways of understanding. We're not just doing this procedure with math. All right, Melissa.

So just lastly with math, we now have 16 days of practice before the state test, and I'm a little longer runway than ELA. We have daily mastery practice. We've been doing that for the past five weeks.

Where we have a strong grapple problem; so a rigorous problem. You can see a snippet of one of the double number lines I was describing, down below, where we give students a problem that's hard for them to grapple with.

And then we have a student, just like Marie, who's up at the top picture, that goes and showcases their work while other students are involved in the discussion, such as Victoria, who is taking notes and updating her work based upon the discussion as a class, and we have practice.

We started off mastery season with one grapple and three practice. We're leveling up weekly to one grapple question and 15 practice. Just as with ELA, we've been focusing on coaching students and having coaching plans, and target students that teachers are going around and giving transferable coaching points.

We've been bringing that in with math as well. This week's been the launch point for that. Next week's when we level up. Being that even though there's a ELA test, we are still doing the same work.

And then, similarly, we've had our daily end of day meetings. We have had small groups in every grade level. Now I know myself, Ms. Calger's going to be taking on our third and fourth grade AP.

We're taking on a third and fourth grade groups starting late next week, as well, to do the last 10 days extra push to really push our students there. I.

Think one thing that we've really just want to stamp, is this all of school approach where Keisha's been involved, our culture team's been involved, really being heavily involved in mastery.

So that it's not just teachers on hand. I think it's very important that, culturally, that our teachers see leaders are in doing the work. We are in for a work we know. We believe in this, we're not just talking about it, we're doing it too.

This is something that is really important to us and, I think, really leading to a lot of buy-in with our teachers. Obviously, is exhausting. Obviously, this time of year, March is one of the most stressful months of the year.

But I think when it comes to staff culture and progress, as right now, we're not seeing that big pitfall that teachers fall into when it comes time for like, "Kids are not getting the conceptual. All right. I'm going to go back to dad, mother, sister, brother, for division."

Or, "The area model was frustrating a couple of kids, so I'm going to go back to the standard algorithm for multiplication." Or just my example around the double number line.

No. You only can do proportions. That's a quick way I learned. So we're not resorting back to that challenge, and we're really staying really focused. Malik and I talk a lot about this. It's not just about the testing.

It is, "Yes. We have this measurement at the end of April for math, and next week for ELA." But this is about us building practices so that students can be problem solvers, and critical thinkers, and their ideas come forward and are at the forefront of everything that they're doing.

I think that's very intentionally why it's called mastery. It's called mastery and not test prep. It's because we are getting them to master content, but also, we're getting them to become better readers, become better writers, become better thinkers in math.

And that's something, just, I really want to stand for everybody. It's an important just around our school ideology and something that we're...

When we think about the core pillars, rigor is not just throwing tough questions there, it is how we think and how we act as a school. I really want to emphasize that. Melissa, I believe that's it. Any questions?

Aaron:

If I followed you correctly, a lot of the variance from last IA to this IA, it sounds like it's, in large part, attributable to this really ratcheting up of the rigor that we've built into the IAs. Did I follow that correctly?

Kurt Davidson:

Yeah. I think there's a number of factors in place. I think that is one, definitely. I think many other factors that comes down to, I think, with seventh, eighth grade, a lot of our students are, "You all are making me do this again." And we're going through; some of it is that.

And I think a lot of it is, we are not just looking at the raw numbers, we're looking at the habits. So we're looking at progress in students' habits, when it comes to their annotate of questions and growth there.

However, some of it's not translating. I think one of the biggest things in ELA, is student reading level, in general. I think sometimes we overcomplicate. But if a student is two grade levels behind reading level and they're put in a grade level text, it's a heck a lot harder for them to get the main idea if every third or fourth word is a challenge for them.

And so, I think that is a factor. And then, I think math as well, the standards get tougher throughout the year. So those are mine. I'm sure Malik has a few others.

Aaron:

Yeah. And I think-

Malik Russell:

I guess I would say, I think Kurt said right. Just to give a more... It's not simple. So the answer is, there are a bunch of factors, the things that we think, things that we know.

Things that we know is that, we're go in the right direction. We know that the method we are using is appropriate. We also know that we're teaching in one of the most strangest times of all time.

And so, like, "Hey, do I know the exact effects of what two years off of school or remote learning has done?" I do know that our reading levels are down because kids read less. That's a focal point.

I do know that kids are invested in being in school, and we need to figure out how to make sure that investment keeps building. The answer to that, we are certain that we're going in the right direction.

We are not certain about all the right levels to pull, but we are looking really, really, really closely at it, and I think we're going to get it right.

And so, I can give you a more flowery answer, but I think that's really where we are at. We know the teaching is better, we know the kids are learning more, and we know we're going in the right direction.

And I also think that we're still going to see big pushes in our state exams. But that's not really our bar. Our bar is, how to get consistent in going in one direction, not only in classroom for what we see, but also in assessments and everything else we see? Does that make sense with that or no?

Aaron:

No, no. It did. I think what I'm really getting at is, if the rationing up of rigor was a part... Forget about trying to really specify how big of a part.

... was part of it, do we feel like the IAs are now in a place where they represent the rigor that we want to be evaluating? So this is a jumping off point for that, or are we still working-

Malik Russell:

That's a great question. And I think what Kurt was talking about me and him, we talk about this a lot. I'm not sure. So if we try to figure out. So what we know is, I like the direction.

I like the fact that people are going in the most rigorous place of all time. But we want to make sure that we are giving ourselves the best indicators of how we are doing in short term and long term for all our learners. We're trying to figure that out.

And I know that's a little bit of a Milly Mouse answer. But I love the fact that we are going to the direction of going really rigorous. But having really difficult questions also while pushing in the right direction, might allow you to miss some things.

And so, we want to figure out exactly what the right mixture is of it. And so the answer is, we're not sure yet, but I love the direction. This would be a much different conversation if it's like, "Hey, we're trying to give the easiest courses ever."

I love that we're going in critical thinking direction. But I also want to make sure that we are effective in assessments, so that we know the most about our instruction and can get it better.

Aaron:

Got it.

Shanta Pressley:

I love the new ELA strategy of having them jot their thoughts down within the paragraph as they read. That's actually a strategy that is taught when prepping for the LSAT. So that's rigor in itself.

So I appreciate that ed. My one concern, I'm still trying to figure out or understand the percentages in the charts. So on that chart for ELA, for-

Malik Russell:

[crosstalk 01:07:01] show for ELA. What's that? So we have the chart that has the grades on it, I'm guessing.

Shanta Pressley:

Yes, yes.

Malik Russell:

Because there'll be twos going to take ELA, they'll probably have both the average score and then the percentage above 75%.

Shanta Pressley:

Yes. So I'm just trying to understand the approach to trying to address fourth grade with the drop to 6%, and then sixth grade with that drop.

Malik Russell:

So one of the reason why we give both concepts, is, you look at percentage above. So if you look at, there's a 14% to 6%. But the actual average score was the same.

And so, that can mean lots of the things. The point is, "Hey, our overall goal for everyone to be proficient; our proficiency level right now, it might raise." I want it to be 80%, right now we're 75%. And so, that's the percent we're proficient.

Now, if you look the average score, the truth is you could look more into that on an individual basis. And so, we had to see what percent of people were like...

So when me and Kurt look at the data, how many people were really close? How many people were in 45 to 78%? How many people were in one to 30%, as far as how they scored?

And so, the approach is not really encompassed by these numbers. These numbers are indicative of things that we see. But how we try to address it, has more to do with more specific numbers.

Do we have a tremendous amount of people in a certain place? Do we have bifurcated data? We have a huge number of people that are low and lots of who are high, and then our average are in the middle. And so, we're trying to figure that out.

So it depends on what we're seeing. But we do look at like, "Hey, a drop in fourth grade." We want to make sure that we're looking closely at like, "What the tests look like, what were the condition's like?" And we had to look at all that stuff altogether.

And so, the answer there is a lot more inputs in this than Jesse's numbers. We're trying to give you the most robust concept that you can get from the numbers, without looking at each and every paper that's submitted. Does that make sense?

Kurt Davidson:

Just so you know where our process is, obviously fourth grade stood out to us. So what do we do? We did a student work study. Mr. Brown participated. We had the high school...

PART 2 OF 8 ENDS [01:10:04]

Kurt Davidson:

... work study. Mr. Brown participated with the high school during our, we had a leader PD day, and we spent a good two hours looking at students' IA. We pulled out all of their IAs. So we picked four students who underperformed at IA 3, that had been closer to the mark, or above the mark on IA 2. And we looked at their comparing their actual work between the two, to see, try to diagnose some of the things that were different. And I think one of the, our big diagnoses in there was fourth grade, we are not seeing enough of, we're seeing the jots of the text, but we're not seeing kids put their ideas down for

the answer. They are relying so heavily on the choices there. And then, not necessarily picking their ideas. And we want to put fourth grader, big emphasis is putting your thought forward.

And we definitely use that as a major next step, when it came to what we're doing with fourth grade there. So that's how we are analyzing it. And as a team, and I know we had Malik was going big, and Gila and [inaudible 01:11:16] text. And giving us feedback along Mr. Brown had other students, we were looking at several students who did that. And that's the process that we did as a whole leadership team. And then, our, like everything else, that's transferable, right? So the idea is we do that as a team, and then leaders go back and do that practice with their other grades as well, and with their teachers. And we want to transfer that to teachers, so that they're doing this same practice. And that's what our day to day meetings are.

We've gotten to a place where teachers are getting a lot better. We're not, obviously not a hundred percent there, and we're not, it's not universal, but teachers are a heck of a lot better now at looking at the question types, and looking at where students are doing well and where they're struggling. So that is our internal process as well.

Malik Russell:

May I answer your question? I know that was a convoluted nuts. Correct.

Shanta Pressley:

Yeah. Yeah. The approach of going through and trying to understand, it's not, to be honest, it sounds like the students are getting lazy, right? Because of the time away. And I understand the, as you say, the rigor of the work is changing, and they don't want to apply themselves to do it. So I, that in itself is probably a challenge.

Malik Russell:

Yeah. We like to not use words like lazy. We try to just use-

Shanta Pressley:

Oh, sorry.

Malik Russell:

... No, no, no. It's more just like, hey, people are people, right? And we have to make sure that we understand where they're coming from. And so, yeah. Hey-

Ellen:

Contemplated is a way of, yeah.

Malik Russell:

Yeah. [inaudible 01:13:00].

Ellen:

Yeah.

Malik Russell:

For example, the eighth grade numbers, for me, aren't that shocking, because eighth graders know they can do it. And they're like, "Okay, you want us to get up? This is a mock test now. Okay, fine." Right? And so, we know that. But based on what we see on a day to day basis, I feel good about where they're going to show up. Right? Bigger questions like fourth grade, I think they're going to show better than they have, because I think that our rigor level is at higher. And, but I do think that this data is probably reflective of some proceduralism in that grade. Right? Third grade, it matches what we've been thinking.

But all of it is our, and I used to always say that, when I was an investment banker, a model is basically just a complication of my first predictions. Right? And so, we can, you can make it complex about what it is. The answer is, we don't know exactly what it is, but we are doing everything to try to figure out what the right thing is, and what I am certain of, that we are moving in the right direction.

Shanta Pressley:

Yeah. Okay. Appreciate that. Yep. Thanks.

Malik Russell:

Thank you.

Shanta Pressley:

Oh, and I got the answer to the math problem, right? Number 19. It's 12%.

Malik Russell:

Well, I got to, we got to check that. And no-

Kurt Davidson:

It is accurate. I did check as well. Yes. Good job.

Malik Russell:

... No, I'm not taking this riddle. Is that [inaudible 01:14:29]. It take you a little while? Let me ask you a question. Did you get a wrong answer first?

Shanta Pressley:

No, I didn't.

Malik Russell:

I don't believe you. All right.

Shanta Pressley:

No, I actually did the, no, you had to do the math. You can't just subtract the percentages.

Dan:

Malik. This is Dan Mags. Say a word about rigor for one second?

Malik Russell:

Sure, absolutely.

Dan:

Aaron, the question was, is this, does this happen from time to time? And I know you want perspective from what other schools go through. And I think back to the 15 or 16 years that schools that I can remember by name, have gone through real, real transitions to say, "We don't do things the way we used to. We're doing things this way." I can almost name them to the school. They've all, for some reason, taken a step back during that first year of saying, "This is really hard, whether it's rebellion or whether it's just discomfort with learning things a new way." There's normally a step back before a step forward. But if the consistency of the message is there, it always picks back up again and works in your favor.

Malik Russell:

Thank you Dan. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Ellen:

And I think that goes the same with all businesses, right? When you have a real change in your organization, whether it's mentality or what your goal is, and how the methodology, especially, there's going to be a bit of a setback prior to progression.

Malik Russell:

Okay. Only thing, I want to be clear about this. What we are looking at is data. I want to be clear. We aren't making a step back. Just that the overall concept. We just still going forward. We just aren't getting to where we wanted to go, as quick as we want to get there. Right? So we're going forward. And you look at last year's state test exams. You look at our classrooms this year. We are certainly going forward, in both qualitative and quantitative measures. But we still are trying to figure it out and get it right, to where we want it to be at. And so, that's, I do want to make sure that's, that we are. And there are times that we make, we might make step backs backwards in other spaces, but right now, we are still going very much forward. But just, it takes time. Any more questions? Thoughts? All right. So now, I will, thanks a lot, Kurt. Really do appreciate that. I usually like to give the speaker the last word. So Kurt, you say the last word. Say something with class.

Kurt Davidson:

And I would like to love to turn it over to the honorable Anthony Brown. Congratulations. Welcome.

Anthony Brown:

I appreciate that, Mr. Davidson. I don't know about how honorable, but I'll take it. Good evening, everyone. I'm just going to go through the high school where we are, in terms of, I don't have the data at this particular moment, because we just conducted our third IAs on March 16th and 17th. Our teachers are still currently scoring those IAs. And I just want to get into the reason why we don't have some of those IAs at this particular time. Well, the actual scores, all of the math and science IAs, in order for, because we are moving in a conceptual direction, it is required, even in the multiple choice, that they explain their answers. They show computations where they have to. Show how they got to their particular goal, mathematically as well. And so, it is no longer that a scholar can just circle A, B, C, or D, and get full credit.

The only way a scholar can get full credit on any of our math and science IAs, is to make sure that they circle or identify the correct answer. But the same time, provide some type of explanation and or computation that goes along with those questions. At the next board meeting, I will make sure that I have all the data for you. In terms of our IAs, those are broken down by the algebra 1, algebra 2, geometry, ELA, we have history, we have global. So there's a lot of areas that we are still getting in, so that I'll make sure that our information is available to everyone. What's coming up at this particular time? Anytime that we have our IAs, we do do data analysis. We have, what we define, our CIPs. And that's just our acronym for Corrective Instructional Action Plans.

And that's pretty much how we look at the data to determine what we need to do in order to change our instruction, in order to target the needs of our scholars. Right now, we've had, we have one for stem and humanities. We're looking to merge those together to have one solid Corrective Instructional Action Plan, that speaks to all the curriculum, because we, just like we're going in the interdisciplinary direction, we want all that we do in terms of data analysis to be interdisciplinary as well. And that goes to say, one of the things that we've been doing across the board, very similar to the K8, is the close reading strategies. And so, implementing those close reading strategies to see what they're annotating, and see what the anotate, not only in history and ELA, but also in math and science, to determine whether or not those annotations are supporting our scholars and understanding how to arrive at the best answer.

And so, that's one of the things that we are doing at this time to make sure that our scholars are able to determine how they're getting to those particular answers. So we have our, also a scholar self assessment, that we're moving toward, so that our scholars can look at what they've done on their assessments, on their IAs, and determine what were they thinking? Why did I get this particular answer wrong? Was it computational? Was it conceptual? Was it combination of both? Did I make a small error, mathematically, that led me to the answer that was incorrect? So just getting the scholars to have more input and understanding around how they made those answers. Because we're, as we move toward the direction we want to go, we want our scholars to take more ownership over their learning. And using a scholar self assessment is what we're, one way that we're doing that. One of the things that we're moving into as well, is our Regents Mastery.

Well, we've started some of it, but we're going to be more intensive and intentional as we move forward. And part of that, is that we've had our Regents Fridays every Friday, because we are, in terms of our math and our science, as well as all of our subjects. We want our scholars to have a deep conceptual understanding. And so, as such, we want to see if from the week, from the Monday through Thursday, can they apply those particular skills, that conceptual understanding, to reasons questions, and do better on those particular Regents questions. So we're in that particular space at this time. We're moving toward making sure that our classes are set up in such a way, that when they come in, they do nows, or entrance tickets, and exit tickets. They're all Regents based.

But once again, I want to say that when we say Regents based, but we're not talking about circling answers. We're not just talking about saying A, B, or C is correct. We're always asking, and not asking, but we're requiring all scholars to provide some type of explanation and computation of steps behind what they're explaining, especially in the math and science areas. In the humanities, as you know, with essays, we do have rubrics that our scholars are using, as a means to gauge where they are, but also assess their work to determine where they need to go in order to improve.

We have, oh, and I just want to step back for a second, very quickly, with our corrective instructional action plans. One of the things we do as well, is our teachers, they do, we do work in teams to go over the data as well, so that the teachers can speak to one another to determine what they see were common trends in the particular data, so that we can collectively address those particular areas

across all the courses. Another aspect of our Corrective Instructional Action Plan goes to, we realized that especially during this particular time of COVID, and what has happened to many of our scholars, we have a social emotional component to it.

Seeing, well, if our scholars didn't do so well on certain questions, or what was going on with the exam? Was there a lot of anxiety? Because that's been a huge area, a mental health area, that we've been dealing with this year. Many students have anxiety in terms of testing, in terms of just being in school as well. And another aspect of it is stamina. Many of our scholars have lost the stamina in order to take tests for long periods of time, which has impacted their ability to perform at a higher level.

But as we move back to Mastery, one of the things that we are consistently doing is a error analysis. And that just means one of the things that we do, we take questions. I don't know if you all are familiar. You can go on the, look at old regions, and they have examples of essays that are ones, two, threes, fours. And so, we take those particular essays in twos, give those scholars the rubrics, and see, okay, based upon this, you see where the scholar is at. Well, the scholar that actually did it where they were. And so, we want you to identify what you can do better. And then, correct, create, write an essay at a level four, based upon what you learned from that particular rubric, and your understanding of what you've learned in your particular class.

And the same thing with our math and our science. Looking at answers that are incorrect. And then, identify what particular steps the scholar took that was incorrect. And then, understanding what they need to do in order to move in a direction where they can actually get the correct answer. And as we move through these phases, we are very big on allowing scholars to figure out their best route to get to their destination. Because there's, if you are trying to get to one destination, there's many ways to get there. So we always want to leave it open to our scholars to find their own way to get to that particular destination, as opposed to forcing them to have some procedural driven way, that can be very difficult when you get to problems that are slightly different.

Another thing that we're doing consistently, is we're spiraling Regents questions all the time. Not only through the do now, the entrance, exit tickets, but to check for understandings while they're in the classes as well. We have something called, I call all CR. All questions are constructive routes to answer questions, which means that everything requires you, the ability to explain why you chose that. What's your explanation of how you got to where you're going? Just writing down steps is fine, but at the same time, being able to explain why you did, or chose each particular step, is just as important. So these are some of the things that we're doing as we're moving forward to Regents Mastery, so that we can make sure that we do have, like I say, our goals that are high, which is 90% of our scholars to pass all, whatever Regents exam they're going to take. So we have to have a plan in place for that to happen.

Malik Russell:

I appreciate it, Mr. Brown. So let's go to the next section. Anybody have any questions for that section? Something around the high school? You good? I do want the overarching concept is that we are now utilizing things from lower school to high school, making sure we really are coming together on our process and also our approach. Great. And is that, we now have the operations. Is that right? Or am I making that up?

Melissa Alston:

That's right.

Malik Russell:

Okay. So now, we will go to the operations portion of it, of the school portion of the show. All right. So.

Melissa Alston:

Keisha, can you start please?

Kisha Perez:

Yes. Are you going to present?

Melissa Alston:

Oh. I sure am presenting just to myself. My apologies.

Malik Russell:

It looks wonderful though. Thank you.

Kisha Perez:

Good evening, everyone. Happy Thursday. For this month, for current enrollment, we have zero seats to fill. Usually, around January, we start filling the seat. It's just hard to actually make the students midyear. For the current details on enrollment, obviously, for the enrollment's, going to be zero. We did have two withdraws for this month. Moving on to applications. You can see a little bit of a difference from the 2022-2023. Two things to highlight. For the 2019-2020 school year, and for the 2021-2022 school year, that is the total amount of applications we received for that year. So for this year, this is up to date for, currently, for as of March 24th. We have 1097 applications, with additional 388 from our common app error. So about a month ago, we were doing an audit on running the lottery and seeing how our applications are doing. We noticed that there was an error from our school men platform, which we use for our lottery. It wasn't filtering all of our applications from our common app, which we require a lot of applications around the district, and from a lot of other schools.

So we realized that there was an error. So we escalated the situation. So they promised us that by tomorrow, they'll have this fixed. So if you add the common app error, which is 388, you get a total of 1485 applications, which is great for comparing to the rest of the school years. Any questions on this data?

Ellen:

That is wonderful. Great marketing efforts, guys. Truly appreciate that. That is how we grow our school. Right? So this is really good to hear. Thanks.

Kisha Perez:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Thank you. This is a little bit of the lottery preview. So for the 2020-2021, you can see a little bit more of a difference as well. One huge, huge thing to highlight, is the applications for the In district. We have now about 514, and we have 111 siblings attending. Literally, all the little siblings that we've seen, and said hi to, and learned their names, they are now going to be rolling into our kindergarten. So it's going to be super exciting to get the most of them there. Good thing is also the applications for our IEPs. We have doubled the amount of applications we have received. Who knows how many more we are going to get when we correct the common app error? So this is really, really huge for us as well. Any questions? All right.

This shows a little bit of the breakdown for each per grade, of what our lottery applications look like so far. I know a little bit, it looks a little different between kindergarten, sixth grade, and ninth grade. This may be different once we get the common app error issue fixed, but those are usually our big, big majority of applications that we received. So hopefully by tomorrow, we'll have way better data to show for the next month.

Ellen:

So looks like that our CPA is... Hmm. Oh, okay. The advocate. Okay. Nevermind.

Kisha Perez:

Yeah. Please see more applications, hopefully for the ninth grade. I think I know where you were going.

Ellen:

Yeah. Thanks.

Malik Russell:

Yeah. So the idea is basically, hey, we have bunch of applications, about 400, that we don't know where they are yet. And those will probably fill in those gaps of the assumption. It's just a technical issue with how enrollment worked for us with the common app. That's right.

Kisha Perez:

Lastly, this is the enrollment landscape from Pasek. The big, really big thing to look at here, is the percent change in the BEDS day enrollment. So if you can see the percent from 2019 to 2022, charter schools are up to 4% of enrollment, and public schools have decreased to 10%. It looks like public schools are also decreasing with enrollment, and more scholars are choosing charter schools. So this might be a really good thing for us, for the next upcoming years. Any questions?

Speaker 1:

I forgot, but do we backfill?

Kisha Perez:

Back, we do.

Malik Russell:

Yeah. So yeah, we backfill. We backfill K through, as the independent, but K through 10, basically. Any other question with that?

Speaker 1:

Why would we take scholars after eighth grade?

Malik Russell:

Just because we have a high school, and I'm trying to expand the high school. So we have to take a bunch of scholars in eighth and ninth grade. It's one of our biggest spaces. We still feel like we have a great opportunity to put in our thoughts and processes. Host ninth grade up to tenth. And obviously,

hey, we don't have spaces, we don't have spaces. But for similar spaces, K through 10 is, we feel like, is the right spot.

Speaker 1:

I guess what I'm asking is, do we backfill site on scene?

Malik Russell:

We follow the rules that are part of the library system, and that those are the rules.

Speaker 1:

Okay.

Malik Russell:

And so, basically, hey, anyone gets, is a lottery system. Your priority based on-

Kisha Perez:

IEP-

Malik Russell:

... IEP-

Kisha Perez:

... sibling, or district.

Malik Russell:

... sibling, or district. And then, after that, it's a lot random. Thank you, Kisha. Appreciate that.

Kisha Perez:

Nope.

Shanta Pressley:

Last year also, at the graduation, we saw a number of eighth graders leaving, not going into the high school, right?

Malik Russell:

Yes.

Shanta Pressley:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). So that's a good reason too, to allow students to come in at that level.

Malik Russell:

Right. And I think also, as we, we're making a better spot, we want people, the whole point is to make sure people have choices. But the, if we're, people making different choices, that means we need to

make the product better. And so, I think that, yes, we want to hold more of our eighth grades to come straight through. Does that answer that question, or anything else you have that, [inaudible 01:37:00] or Shante?

Speaker 1:

Oh, that answers my question. Thanks Malik.

Malik Russell:

All right. Appreciate it.

Jessica Boulet:

Actually, I'm curious. When scholars do come in at the ninth grade, is there an assessment or support onboarding for them, in case they're in a different place academically?

Malik Russell:

The answer is yes. And so, we are promoting more thoughtfulness around that now. And so, that's a very current concept. But yes, we are trying to make sure that we are, well, evaluating where they're at, giving them the supports they need, and also from a scope with sequence standpoint, making sure they're on track to be where we think they need to be as a graduate.

Jessica Boulet:

And also, on the other side of that, if people are coming in and they're advanced, or students who are with us are advanced, what flexibility is there within the high school for kids to select what they want? Or is that not a question that it's come up?

Malik Russell:

It's a course that we want to come up. And I think we're creating more and more opportunities for that at. As of right now, we are just trying to right size, make sure we have the necessities, but we are adding AP programs. We can talk about the direction we going to go in the high school at a different meeting. But the idea is that we want to make a space that is intellectually engaging, challenging, and useful, for all of our students. And that's part of it.

Jessica Boulet:

Absolutely. Yeah. And part of the reason why I ask, is just because I, growing up, also went to some huge schools that have all this flexibility. And then, small schools that had to come up with creative ways to create flexibility, where you just have fewer students, fewer classrooms, that kind of thing. So. And there were, and I saw some really interesting systems. So yeah. [crosstalk 01:39:11].

Malik Russell:

One of the reasons for the expansion is that we want to be able to offer more things. Because the number of students is a big limitation, especially in high school. Okay. All right, Kisha. Go ahead. I apologize.

Kisha Perez:

No. I was done.

Malik Russell:

Oh, that's it.

Melissa Alston:

So I just wanted to add two things. Just more specifically to add onto what Kisha said. The school men error is because we changed our name from Metropolitan to New Austin in the system. So the applications were pulling to this space that didn't exist. It was like they were into a hold space, and they are having to pull it back into our system, because we finally noticed that there was an issue with it. So that's the more specific context on that. And then, in regards to this slide, I just wanted to go back to this slide, because this is really, really, we're really, really proud of this. We have probably about 70-ish, less applications than this time last year. But if you look, the numbers are 40 more IEPs, double the amount of in districts, double the amount of siblings. That is really, really impactful.

Especially, so that district number, it really shows that we're really having a stronghold in the community. And the IEP number is great, because we're really advertising that we're, our ICT classes and what we're focused on. And that's not including those 388 applications, which yes, we don't know what grade, but we also don't know if they have IEPs, if they're in district, or if they're siblings either. So that's just a, those are really, really great metrics for us.

The next item is an update from the manager of talent acquisition and marketing. So we still just have the manager of data open. Haven't found anyone yet. And we are fully staffed. We've been fully staffed for a while. In regards to updates specifically on what she's working on, she's working on leader training for talent, and what talent's going to look like this year, especially taking all of her key learnings from last year, and all of the hires that we had to make, and all the holes we needed to fill, and protocols we needed to make. So getting the leaders now on board with that. And then, and all these other ones that are now bolded are ones she's just ongoingly working on. And then, we have the charter school directory. And that's a partnership between Kisha and Claudia, in regards to getting us into the charter school directory. And we also, it's coming out in a couple days. And we're also going to have a full page ad in there as well, which we're really excited about.

The next thing is retention. So this is retention from two years ago to this year. We projected, with our intent to return survey, that 90% of our staff would come back. That's inclusive of those, that number's inclusive of those that said that they were undecided. We counted them in this number as a returning. And then, the actual number when we went back, the actual number of retention was 71%. So we know that it's been, there's a lot of career changes, and it's just a harder environment to staff schools. But being that we were fully staffed since probably January, not that that's what we want, obviously in a school, but that when we look at other schools, they're not seeing the same success.

So while the 71% is not what we want, it is, we have done a really good job to staff the building this year. In regard, so this is intent to return the one that we just completed for this year. There was just one leader who said that they were not returning. Five teachers that said they were undecided. And everyone else said that they were returning. This is a better outcome than we had last year. And we also have more staff members this year, because of our org chart changes last year. So we're projecting a 97% intent to return this year.

And then, if anyone wants to know anything specific, I'm happy to answer the questions offline. So TNTP did a survey of companies and of schools. And I wanted to just call out these findings. A hundred percent said it was harder to find substitute teachers than in previous years. 86% of those they

surveyed said it was harder to hire classroom teachers than in previously years. And 76% reported fewer applications for their vacancies than in previous years. So we saw that not only was this something new that the school had to take over, but we also had to really take it over in a very difficult market. So there were a lot of key learnings that we had. Just, and we're learning every day. Like just now, usually what we think of, because we're not marketing experts. We're trying to get there. But I actually just texted Claudia, and I said, "Why don't we, instead of just advertising our school near our school, why don't we put a posting at the bus stop in front of Fordham University? Why didn't we think about that before? I thought about that, like 20 minutes-

PART 3 OF 8 ENDS [01:45:04]

Melissa Alston:

-Fordham University. Why didn't we think about that before. I thought about that 20 minutes ago. So we're really constantly trying to be innovative and think about what else we can do to grab who we need. What do we want? Teachers, where are they in school? So those are things that we're thinking about all the time. Any questions on retention? Okay.

As far as the expansion is concerned, we continue to have weekly meetings. We have, with the architect and our broker have completed a test fit for just a high school building. It's very small, but this is a little sample of what the test fit looks like. And this is for a location in the Bronx that we're looking at. And there's other locations we are looking at as well. We're just being very intentional and very thorough because we want to make sure that it's the right kind of space, the spaces are flexible, and we're really going to make this move. It's going to be the right one. So we've had lots of conversations about this. So more to come there. We are now going to start beginning to have increasing conversations in regards to finance with For Sector. And For Sector has been in some of these meetings and very involved in doing lots of analysis around the budget and around our enrollment and how that ties to what we can afford. So we're deep in those kind of conversations as well. Not just can we fit in a space and how would that work.

In regards to compliance, we continue to have grants that we submit. There's lots of grants out there. We're in the process of submitting another one with For Sector to the borough president at the end of this month, it's due in about a week. We did submit the CRDC, that was a federal report. And then we did submit... We have some tech grants and other grants that we submitted. And those will be reflective on the budget. So you'll be able to see those going forward.

Future submission. So this is going to continue to be a submission. Before COVID we didn't have to submit attendance in a separate place. We have to do that since last year. So this is going to be continuous until June at least, if not longer. So in regards to COVID, we're really happy about this number. We're back to zero. And that is really, really great. So Keisha has been able to focus on lots of other things, because she is not the tracking person, manager, and logistics person, at least not this month.

In regards to my priorities, focusing on staff return conversations. What those look like? How do we feel about them? Do we need follow ups? When do we need follow ups? Making sure we're not missing anybody. And then making sure... Sometimes people say, "No I don't want a conversation." Then they hear everybody else having a conversation. They're like, "I want a conversation." So making sure we keep those. I see Kurt's face. He's like, "Yes, that happens." So making sure that we work, including everybody, that's very important.

And then another thing that I am more increasingly working on is the development of the team. For me getting tasks done and making sure that there's continuous improvements have to balance with development. And I think I'm really being more intentional about that more recently. So I put that in bold. Again the ones that are not in bold are ongoing things, in regards to operations in a very, very deep search for a potential new PEO. It is not a decision that we've made. We haven't brought it to the board yet, but just having lots of conversations with different PEOs to see what the best option is there. Ellen, I just saw your hand. I'm sorry. Do you have a question?

Ellen:

Oh, no, that was a fat thumb. Sorry.

Melissa Alston:

No problem. And then technology RFP, again, very heavy in conversations to see what all is out there in regards to tech services. Obviously we always want to make sure that we have the best partners, and we're being fiscally responsible as well with the funds because we always want to make sure we can push as many funds as possible towards our outcomes for students and those supports. So just making sure that we're doing what we can there.

And then expansion cost projections, I actually just talked about that. That's what we're doing with For Sector. But additionally, what I'm doing is an analysis in regards to all of our systems, our power school system that houses all of our data. How much does it cost to double the amount of scholars that are going to be in there? Because those kinds of subscriptions among others are based on the scholar count. So all of these things that we feel like are probably small, we already pay for, but are going to double and triple because we're expanding. Those are important and those are things we're taking into consideration as well. And then obviously finishing up the budget.

Then in regards to reminders. Just a reminder April is going to be a in-person meeting. It seems like we're not going to have any more extensions. So we are going to be in person for April. Wins are reporting, compliance, on time. Wellness program, the team just really loving all of the things that we're doing for wellness and Claudia actually heads up our care squad and she goes around and she's always being super intentional in regards to the staff and what they need in collaboration with Keisha and response to COVID.

Jessica Boulet:

Melissa, if I could just add on to that. Not add on, but just say for everybody. Since I know that for some people it's going to be a transition to do things in person, especially people who are still remote, just if you know now, or as soon as you know if you will not be able to attend in person, please let Melissa know immediately. Because we want to get ahead of those core mission issues for sure. So as soon as you know, please.

Melissa Alston:

Thank you.

Malik Russell:

Miss Jessica, I appreciate that. That's helpful. All right. Thanks, Melissa. I appreciate the school team, including myself for that wonderful spread of information. And now I will turn it on Shanta for the finance committee.

Shanta Pressley:

Oh, it's my turn? I went to find my shirt.

Malik Russell:

Yeah. The shirt's hot. It's nice.

Shanta Pressley:

What did you say?

Malik Russell:

I said the shirt this is very nice.

Shanta Pressley:

Oh, thank you. It's my new [inaudible 01:52:29] and board member shirt. So good evening, everyone. Happy Thursday. No general updates from the finance committee. As always the participation is appreciated. We do very well each month and I will turn it right over to Eugene to give the February financials.

Eugene:

Good evening, everyone. Thank you for having me once again. For the financials through February of this year, February 2022, as we see total cash is just short of 5.6 million dollars at the end of February of which 70,000 is restricted. We've put in some title grant claims tune of about \$363,000. So we should be receiving those funds hopefully fairly soon to add to the cash total. Market value of our investments \$5.2 million. And per pupil, we've received the fifth payment of our per pupil funding at the end of February. And that is to pay for operating activities in March and April.

Right. So as we also see from our statement of financial position, key metrics, net assets is doing very well at \$11.4 million, holding steady from the previous month. Our metrics are doing great as always. Current ratio 3.670 holding. Our current ratios are always well above the DOEs of measurements, their base measurements, debt service coverage ratio 2.71. All the ratios are always well above, or if necessary well below the ratio, the DOE standards. We see the budgeted enrollment again 662. We picked up approximately nine students in this recent billing cycle. So the actual enrollment that we have is at 667 through the fourth billing cycle. And year to date revenue again, the gross revenue \$10.4 million. Gross total expenses 8.9, which leads us to a net surplus through February \$1.4 million. That's against a forecasted surplus of 582,000 and a budgeted surplus of 354,000.

If we move to the next page, if there are no questions. Again, we see the ratios and this is in graph form. They're all doing exceptionally well through this year. As of February, they're all doing well. If we move down to enrollment, we can see the cash value of our enrollment. And we see that because we've picked up additional students the per pupil is above... The actual is above the budget. And the SPED throughout the course of this year has been well above the budget. So we're anticipating just on per pupil a surplus of about \$310,000.

And if we move to the next one a snapshot of our revenue, budget versus actual. And as again, we see that in total revenue, we have \$10.4 million again through February, two thirds of the way through the year. That's versus a budget of 15.6. And we have forecasted to receive an additional 358,000 in our forecast so that we should come just above \$16 million in total revenue when the year is

over. In terms of expenses, salaries. Again, we had a savings because we weren't fully staffed early in the year. But we are fully staffed and have been fully staffed for quite some time. But we will see about an \$85,000 savings on our salaries and benefits. In terms of operating expenses we did have to forecast a little bit higher because of additional spending in supplies, and the substitute services earlier in the year were pretty extensive as we ramped up staffing. So we expect to spend about \$215,000 extra in the other than personnel expenses.

But overall, we expect to have a surplus of about 227,000 over the budgeted surplus of 354. So we expect to have a surplus of about \$582,000 at the end of the fiscal year.

Go to the last page, if there are no questions. The last one. Yep. So again, this is the balance sheet. And the balance sheet is strong as always. Cash \$10.9, almost \$10.6 million. Total current assets, very strong at \$11 million, \$2 million above where it was in June of 2021. Fixed assets, we've invested into the facilities. So, we've spent about a million dollars towards fixed assets to strengthen the facilities and the equipment that's being utilized by the school. So overall in our total assets, \$14.5 million in total assets, an increase of about almost \$3 million since June 30th, 2021.

And we see our liabilities are very low. School pays their bills timely. We have very little in the way of liabilities. There's a \$2.3 million number in deferred revenue, and that is the per pupil payment that was made in February. But that is the cover expenses for March and April. Other than that very little in the way of liabilities. And our net assets, our equity, very strong at \$11.5 million. And again, \$14.5 million in liability, total equity. So the school is doing extremely well. The balance sheet looks great from our standpoint through February.

That is my report. Didn't realize that was on, sorry.

Shanta Pressley:

Yeah, I was wondering, I was like [crosstalk 01:59:34]

Eugene:

I'm sorry. I didn't realize that was on.

Shanta Pressley:

No worries. Thank you so much for the financials. Board members, any questions?

All right. Hearing none. We heard the same report last week in the finance committee meeting. We really had no major questions here either. So with that said, I move that we accept the financial report as given.

Aaron:

I'll second that and M&I.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you, Aaron. I'll go through the question with the board. Ellen?

Ellen:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

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Anush?

Anush:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Jessie?

Jessie:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Khari?

Khari:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Sophia.

Sophia:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Aluta?

Aluta:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Tamera?

Tamera:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

And Constance?

Constance:

Aye.

Shanta Pressley:

Awesome. Thank you so much, everyone. And now I will turn it over to Malik to go through the budget.

Melissa Alston:

You're on mute.

Shanta Pressley:

I was going to say, we can't hear you.

Malik Russell:

That made it really difficult because I was saying "Everybody say hello, how are you doing?" And so everyone would wake up a little bit, hello, how are you doing?

Shanta Pressley:

Hey, Malik, how you doing?

Anush:

Hello? How you doing?

Malik Russell:

Great. Enjoy it. Ellen, how you doing? Ellen doesn't want to talk to me.

Ellen:

Great.

Malik Russell:

Well, okay, great.

Ellen:

You woke up my dog. He's doing great.

Malik Russell:

Love it. Love waking have dogs. One thing I do. Great. All right. So now let's get focused on the budget because as I always say, everything we're doing reflects what we are doing. Right? And so one of the things I always said that I would try to do when I joined the organization was make sure that what we did reflected who we are. So as we go through this, I think this goes forward in that progression. So thank you. So going to salaries and org charts. And so basically me and Melissa will both go through this and go back and forth with it, but we want to start with just what we've done. Right? And so, Melissa, can you give an overview what we did from in 2021 to 2022?

Melissa Alston:

Sure. So we made a lot of changes and we're still going to, you'll see, continuing to make changes that align with what we're doing and what our focuses are and what we want our outcomes to be. But last year we changed our directors of instructions to deans of instruction in the K8. And they're focused on humanities and stem. We also added to assistant principals. We previously only had one and the focus was on the lower school. So we split it into K2, three, four, and five eights. And the deans of instructions

are focused on the five eight as well. We'll [inaudible 02:03:23] more supports there is our first year, this year where we introduced the ICT model in kindergarten, third grade, and fourth grade.

We added a Dean of culture. We only had two, now we have three. We introduced our co-directors of college readiness. We also changed our social studies teachers to humanities teachers. And we added a SPED teacher for the high school. And we have them focusing on humanities in stem as well. And we added an ELA teacher and a science teacher in the high school. And those are all aligned with gaps that we saw in the previous org chart and taking us to where we need to go.

Malik Russell:

Good. So if we look at how we are moving now from 2021 to 22, 23, a lot of things that we set up are strong and are continued. If you look here, the changes are in bold. So couple of big things that we're focused on is one, culture. And so we want the culture of the school to really be a focal point of what we do. And so we are changing our Dean's conversation to be leaders of school culture, so that not only they understand that we want to be proactive and moving forward and doing that, but we need to have skillsets to be a different skill set. Not just reacting to behaviors, but more setting the tone for what the entire building feels like.

Another thing that we're going to look for, which we talked about already is this manager of data, which will be a big move that we've been moving towards. And so that's a big move to make sure that like, "Hey, when we focus the data, we want to make sure we have people that are able to communicate and disseminate data in the right way." And then last and not least is this move to... As we look to differentiate learning, we're going to make sure that we have the people to do it. And so in addition to our director of scholar services, we are going to add a SPED DOI. So a person that's going to work alongside the DOIs in middle school, the APS, and K through two and three and four, to make sure that we are getting differentiated learning. And that is really aligned what we do.

And in operations, we are also going to move and have a manager of special projects, which is a catchall, but also a person that we think that should be able to communicate with all portions of the organization. And that's our org chart. And now I'll let Melissa summarize what I said in a not articulate way.

Melissa Alston:

Sure. So you can see the roster here, the org chart for this current school year. So if you look in the bottom right column, this is where we're making those changes that Malik just spoke about. We did try to get a manager of data, but it's very specialized and we want to make sure that the right person, we don't see that person as just crunching numbers. We want that person to be involved in testing, IA's and seeing that whole process of how data's acquired from start to finish. So we're really looking for a very specialized expertise there. This is an org chart change to manage special projects. It's also going to help us support Malik and I in our focus on the expansion. So that's part of what this person will be working on as well.

And then, because we're expanding so much on the ICT model and expanding moreso for next school year, the director of scholar services, we want to make sure that there is enough focus leadership wise on SPED instruction and not just the compliance piece. So making sure that we're not just increasing teachers and thinking that's going to solve the problem, we want to make sure that they're supported. So that's that. And then the manager of operations is just a name change because we're removing the manager of academic operations. We're just wanting to go back to the original title of manager of operations, which is what it was when I was in that role. Did you want me to continue

Malik? So going forward here, we're looking to add a few positions for teachers to the org chart for next year. We're looking to add three gen ed teachers in the K to eight, and also two more ICT teachers in the K eighth. Then we're looking to add three teachers in the high school here. So these are changes on the teachers side that we're proposing.

Malik Russell:

Yeah. And then just to add a voice over on that is like, "Hey, we are focused on differentiate learning. We make sure that we have that. And the K through eight. And additionally, we want to add each just with strong content knowledge to add a larger variety of courses in the high school." Thanks.

And so this right here just reflects the culture concept. One of the things that we have done a lot of thought about and spent a lot of time talking about is that culture is culture, right? What we do and how we live and how we speak is important. And so we want to move from this Dean concept. That's responding to behaviors and move to this leader that is actually proactively setting the temperature for our entire building. And so, because of that, we're going to actually make the position different. We're going to pay them more, but we're also going to demand more from them. And so in K through high school, we are literally going to change the culture of our culture team into a space where they're not being reactive and reliant, but being proactive and actually setting the temperature. And so you'll see that as well. And I believe that we'll see the outcomes there in every aspect of our building. And so I'm very excited about that.

Melissa Alston:

These are the operations changes. So we spoke about the first two here earlier in the leadership slide. And then we also have a change of the office assistant to office manager. We just feel like the title really matches what we expect of this person. So that's why we're making the change there. Same with the assistant manager of operations. So that person is, if you look over directly over to the side is the senior operations associate. And that person is Keisha's right hand person and helps lead the team as well. So just rightsizing those there

In regards to the salary summary for these are just some of the changes in regards to the salary. So actually let me stop. Are there any org chart change questions before we move into salary? Okay. So moving into salary for teachers, we don't have the new DOE scale as of yet. We do have a lot of information that Malik has acquired from other schools and what they're thinking, but to be safe and with four sectors recommendation, we have made all our assumptions on a 7% increase. But in our actual budget model, we have a sensitivity in analysis for a 3, 5, 7, and 9% in the budget, just in case. But in what we're proposing, we're going to go with seven. Right now, we don't have any information on when the scale's going to come out, but we've also had extensive conversations about what we would do if the 7% is not enough.

So we're ready to be flexible there. And then additionally, we have expanded our NYU program. I'm not sure if you remembered, a few months ago I reported that we only have one intern currently for this school year. So we've made a lot of changes to this program. Lighthouse used to manage this program for us. And then we took over midyear January last year with the program. And it was already late in the process. We hire the interns at a very early point, and it just wasn't enough time for us to get a grasp of the program and what we needed to do. So this year we have really worked very hard to expand the program, within the program model, it works as so that we can retain the interns and they have to give us two years of work, at least.

So we think that this is a very strong program. So we want to make sure that we were expanding the program. And what we have now is we actually have expanded within our expansion of the program. So we have four turns this year coming, for next year, we have four interns versus the one. And we also expanded in that we had to apply and such, and we got accepted into their inclusive program, which is going to be really good help for our ICT program. That's what in inclusive means for NYU. So we have three interns for that. So we really just turned around this whole partnership. We were supposed to have four last year, we only got one. And now we're up to seven candidates that we feel really good about. So that is a big change for us. And we're excited about that.

Leaders. Customarily for our school. We've increased leaders year over year by 3%. And we're looking to do this by 5% this year. For culture, Malik spoke about this already. This is the shift in expectations and where we want to go with our culture. Making an edit to the scale to fit the expectations. And then in regards to operations, doing some name changes and having that one org chart change that we discussed. So this is more in detail. Those are like a high level overview for more detail. If the proposed intern high school principal becomes a high school principal, we would have to put him on the high school principal scale, increasing the manager director of operations by 10% and increasing the director of school culture by 10% as well.

Then we have the teacher increases, which are exactly what I just discussed. So we'll move on to culture. Moving the deans of culture, to leader of culture and making that org chart change, expectation change, scale change. That's going to increase the Dean's salary by 23% to get them on the scale, as well as the high school leader of culture. So rightsizing him. And we could talk about that more offline. But rightsizing him and increasing his leader position from 5% to 7% just to be in line there.

And then in regards to operations, we are looking to move the operations team from hourly employees to salary employees. This is really important to us to ensure that we're doing right by everyone. And we want to make sure that all of our staff members feel valued and that we are paying them the way we see fit in our vision of community. So we're looking to increase the school aid salary by 34% to be on the scale of a salary school aid employee going forward and getting rid of the hourly employee. As well as operations office manager, also an hourly position from before that was the office assistant. That's changing the name to office manager, also changing the org chart there. The scale would be a 20% increase.

Ellen:

I assume that the changes in the org chart is directly correlated to the amount of the growth in our population, right. Or is that on a different scale?

Melissa Alston:

In regards to operations or in general?

Ellen:

In general. The org changes, right?

Malik Russell:

I guess some of them are in contemplation of the org chart of the expansion, but also in contemplation of what we need. Right. And so that's why we need the expansion. So the two things go together. And so as a school, we need these changes to the org chart. But it's also as we get ready to expand the enterprise. And so I guess both answers are both no and yes. The question about our [inaudible]

02:18:13] team is we are in the [inaudible 02:18:17] family that demands a lot in a level of commitment. And so we want to make sure that we are also committing to the people that we hire from the community. And so therefore we don't have hourly workers. We do have salary workers.

Ellen:

Yeah. The fundamentals, the basics are an obvious choice. I'm more curious about, as we grow, do we have a model or is it just year by year basis?

Malik Russell:

No.

Ellen:

Should we build out a model as our school grows, right.

Malik Russell:

Yes.

Ellen:

Right?

Malik Russell:

So the quick answer to that is yes. Is it exact? Never going to be, it's a projection. The projections you saw last year, the budget reflected our growth expansion model. Everything you ever see from number standpoint from budget will be seen in the context of our expansion and also be seen in the context of our non expansion. And so the short answer is yes, everything that we have is contemplating the expansion and any kind of budgetary decisions we make. Contemplate that and if that ever changes, then we will change that. Does that answer?

Ellen:

Yeah, I want to...

PART 4 OF 8 ENDS [02:20:04]

Malik Russell:

Is that the answer?

Speaker 2:

Yeah. I want to make sure that we're thinking about how to show that all these expansions is actually helping us grow or making a difference so.

Malik Russell:

Wait [inaudible 02:20:19] so.

Speaker 2:

I want us to always keep that in mind. [crosstalk 02:20:22] Just other people ask, right? Yeah.

Malik Russell:

Right. No and that makes sense. I'm saying that the two things I want to say is the two different conversations, obviously one is about scaling and we are growing in that context. But what you're talking about, I think more is like about ROI, which is like return on investment. And we are definitively looking at, Hey do we invest? Whether it's a new smart board or a new position, we are getting results from that.

Speaker 2:

So that leads me to my cause I'm going to be honest, I'm totally confused as to how all of this comes together in terms of, and I'm less interested in sort of what I'm less interested in the growth conversation and more how this supports academic excellence, academic outcome. And so like, for example, I guess I don't understand why and I guess we can talk about this more or if there's time to talk about at some other particular point I'd like to be sold on why the deans are different than assistant principals. Right. And what and sort of like how that's going to function in your school. And again, how's that connected to outcomes. So I'm a little confused, definitely like to be so a little bit more on some of those things and maybe tonight, not the time to talk about that, but I'm wondering if we're going to have more time to discuss

Malik Russell:

We, can have more I think the answer is simple, right? The answer is just be honest with you, the answer is like, clearly you don't know where you're coming from otherwise the question wouldn't happen, right? So the answer is that like, Hey, the Dean's conversation here was not a the position, the qualifications, the people of deans were not people that had forget leadership experience, teaching experience, right? And so we're moving from like a responsive concept of, Hey, deans, take kids out of classrooms and talk to their parents and then bring them back to a concept of a Dean of culture, a leader of culture, where you are actually skilled at understanding how to manage classrooms. And so you can give that inner that, those interactions to additionally, a place in which you also are proactively coming with programs that are like focused on the social, emotional growth, where you are creating an advisory concept. Right. And so The truth is that's where I think these of cultures should be, that's not where we were from a skillset basis. Does that make sense or no?

Speaker 2:

Yeah. That I guess-

Malik Russell:

Position was a different position. And so I don't like formal the position, so I'm making a new position.

Speaker 2:

Aright.

Malik Russell:

And where-

Speaker 2:

Position in your heart with-

Malik Russell:

New people for those positions.

Speaker 2:

Got you. Right.

Malik Russell:

Right. So it's not, and so the outcomes we haven't seen them, but what I will say is I've been in schools with strong leaders of culture that have defined the school, helped our teachers progress and do all these other things. Was that, am I still not? Am I missing the question?

Speaker 2:

No, I'll spend some more time looking at sort of the Org Chart and what I'm doing I, what I pledge to do is probably come to you a little bit more with questions, they have a little bit more deficit specificities. What I'll do is try to resolve my confusion a little bit around that end and then.

Malik Russell:

What's the [inaudible 02:24:33] I know the initial confusion.

Speaker 2:

No I think I'm clear on the that there's a redesign. I guess what I'm not clear is how that money gets you to the how the money is different.

Malik Russell:

Well, the money is different because the position is different. So we have different people in the position. So we're hiring different people for that position. And so either you are getting a different skillset. So what I'm trying to say is that the deans as formally construed don't make sense, The deans of what I'm talking about, get paid a different amount. And so I don't want to talk about what people get paid that can't, but we also have like different like ideas of what they should have. And so we are changing that idea. And so therefore we change amount, they get paid.

Speaker 2:

Okay. I guess my point would be, let's say I have a Dean [inaudible 02:25:39] right. Who is in a school where he is doing the things that you just talked about. He's reactive. He is only used the, who goes in classrooms, gets kids, brings them out and doesn't, and it takes them back to the classroom. Why would it, why couldn't I develop that dude Kaas, to be the person you're talking about in the context that you're talking about with change, without the change to salaries or things like that,

Malik Russell:

Right? So like, and both, I'm going to put people in the organization in the right spot and also people that have that are great. I'm going to try train them and get them up, but they still need to be paid

different than they have been paid. It just, it just the two things don't go, don't go together. If you are the level of what I'm asking you do is not commiserate with the level of what you're getting paid.

Speaker 2:

Okay.

Shanta Pressley:

So it's more that a pipe change and salary changes more. So the workload and requirements as well

Malik Russell:

This is change where we're changing position and whether we fulfill that internally or externally is almost like I'm agnostic to, but the expectations around the job are going to change. And also the skillset around the job are changing.

Jessica Boulet:

Unless anybody else wants to follow up with questions on this topic. I have a another question, which is just kind of about the, I'm just wondering about the kind of internal transparency and consistency of the scales, I see scales mentioned. Right. And so I just was wondering about from an internal perspective are how it, works from an employee per, from a staff perspective, I guess like are these, are there clear benchmarks in which, these are the scales and I'll do these things to get to this. And then also just kind of across the organization, how that consistency, for example, when I see this great NYU teacher program, right. And all how does, and everything that the adjustments we've had to make, obviously for the information we found out about out how the NYU program works and that pay scale, how does that fit in with the general, with everyone? Who's not an NYU teacher among it, Austin staff.

Malik Russell:

Yeah. I mean, I think I would say that. So one, if you look at scale in two places, one is obviously an interim principal versus a principal. That's just a principal scale. That's easy. The other is scaling from like hourly workers to the minimum amount of work, a minimum amount of salary that a salary worker makes and that's a scale up. And so like those I think are pretty self explanatory from the NYU program expansion standpoint we want to be competitive a fellowship standpoint, like a TFA standpoint. We have our scale of how we pay people. We talk about that. We communicate that to our employees, that's all together in of itself. The NYU program is separate, it's a fellowship program. So it's a little bit less of our scale, a little bit more on like the program scale until we meet that. It does not. And there's no way that someone would think that they were like unfairly complicated based on a, of these concepts.

Jessica Boulet:

And so like the [crosstalk 02:30:01] transitions from like a TFA or an NYU program, if they decided to become full-time staff, from their perspective, that transition makes sense.

Malik Russell:

Of course. Yeah.

Jessica Boulet:

Yeah. I don't know. I've been in situations or seen a lot of things that are the opposite of that. So-

Malik Russell:

No, that would definitely no,

Jessica Boulet:

And, I just wanted to say also I love the switch to salary and just in general, the approach here, it's nice to know, like even though we're not getting into the details, the big picture, I spend a lot of time, all day reading about people not doing it. Right. And it's just really wonderful to hear all this thought. It's very exciting to me. It's hard to express my level of emotion.

Malik Russell:

I appreciate that. Yeah. The thing is that we want, it's like its expectations. We want high level things and we want people that can do the high level things that we want and it makes sense you pay them to do those high level things. And so that's, kind of the move we're going with and that's kind of the direction we're going. Okay. We have any more questions. Thoughts.

Melissa Alston:

Just, and you have something

Aaron:

Go, ahead, Melissa. I just want to take everyone's tab before we make a decision on what happens next.

Melissa Alston:

Sure. So what I was going to say was back to what I think part of what Ellen was, was asking in the beginning, we are doing a lot of work now as well, aside from, can we fit in the space and such in regards to placing what the .org it can look like in a K12 building and if we separate K eight and nine, 12, and who are those people that we currently have that can move to those positions and who we would need to hire and then backwards planning to who we'd have to hire mid-year the year before we expand so that we can make sure that everyone is trained in such. So there's lots of work as well in regards to the org chart, that's happening for expansion as well, aside from these changes that we're, that we're wanting to make now.

Aaron:

Yeah, that's a great point. And, ink in discussing Malic's thinking and how this works with the budget and how this works with expansion over, over the past few weeks on our, check-ins. I think the thing that I kept going back to is, do you, feel like this is setting you up for growth? Not just this year, but in future years, do you feel like you can pivot, do you feel like you're aligned to your values? And I think we've been rolling through those pretty consistently. So for, what it's worth for everybody, I gained a lot of comfort in the alignment and the foresight and the ability to adapt as the model clarifies. And so I'm, comfortable moving to vote on that, but I want to, acknowledge there's some thoughtful questions around details here is specifically for those who've raised stuff, but just generally everybody, does anyone not feel like they have the info at this point to at least vote on approval of the salaries, understanding that perhaps you want to engage with Malic a little bit more offline or going forward

around measuring understanding the direct impact some of these moves are going to have on academic performance, is anybody, not comfortable with taking that vote right now?

Okay. So Malic, how, would you like folks to engage with you further on this? If they want to kind of, get more details or just whatever follows might be coming out of this?

Malik Russell:

No, I think anybody can reach out to me particularly, but I mean, I want to kind send, do we have, the other slide or no?

Shanta Pressley:

Yeah. I was going to say, we need to get through to the number slide so everyone can see what the is, yeah.

Malik Russell:

And so, basically what I want to discuss here is, Hey, we are in a great position. I think that we are focused on doing the right things. We are also in a historically different position. And. So one, we have a, doing a seven percent raise for our teachers, five percent for leaders. And the idea around it is that we are about to hit a very difficult space of holding onto teachers. The DOE is about to come out with their, this summer is going to come out with their understanding and contract with the teachers. And that is a space that no one knows of what's going to look like, but my indications have been from my personal contacts, which have matched the same indications before sector, that those numbers are going to be larger and be bigger. We have a lot of teachers that have left the city, and then it's a lot of leverage on the part of the union.

And so we want to make sure that we are maintaining our ability to be competitive. And we think 7% is brought the right percentage. That adds a large amount of money to our costs. Additionally, we want to make sure that we are providing excellent actual education. And so we are moving in a direction to make sure that our org chart matches our goals, which is to provide excellent education for our students and for our community that they deserve. I feel like we are going that direction. This is a continuation of that. And so as we do that, the number is large. It's 1.456. So let's say 1.5 and increase, but its necessary increase to continue what we're doing. And, more importantly, it's sustainable for what our plans are to grow. We are still being fiscally responsible and we are only going to continue to get better based on that.

And so, as we like, look at these different costs and changes in costs, one, they allow us to keep the teachers we have and to pay them to be, totally honest at a competitive range for what we ask them to do. And then also to provide us with an org chart that supports us as a school and be totally honest. Most importantly, our differentiate learners, which is something we want to make sure we do for our community cause our community needs it. And so with that will be the last I say about as we broke down the costs between all the different things. This is what the increase is over year. And there's an org that supports us now and also supports us we go forward. And with that, I guess then I would ask for people to make their decisions and thoughts about that.

Melissa Alston:

Can I, just add something, so for sector has also provided their approval, they're supportive of this increase as well. And in addition to that, with our focus on ICT we are like, we did this year going to acquire more scholars that have IEPs, therefore we'll have more funding as well.

Ellen:

That was my next question. Thanks Melissa

Shanta Pressley:

Malic or Melissa did, did we get a build out yet? Like a multi-year build out for the budget?

Melissa Alston:

Not yet. We're in the process of that. I think so for sector has put their stamp of approval on this, but we don't have anything official to share as of yet.

Shanta Pressley:

Okay. That's, fine. Excuse me. Any questions on this board members?

Aaron:

And just quickly we touched on this in finance committee. I want, the board to have it. The, multi-year build out is a function of, we all know the charter renewals going on in the background. So it didn't really, we don't, we don't know enough today to do that in a useful way. We will know enough by the time we are approving the budgets for, the upcoming year about more, what that should look like. So that's why you're not seeing that today.

Malik Russell:

Right. And, also the other reason why I'm seeing this, you are seeing this today is because we need to get our offers out and make sure that we are retaining teachers and also hiring new teachers and staff members. And so I think, now we're ready for a vote, I guess. Is that right?

Ellen:

Sounds like it.

Shanta Pressley:

Do I lead this vote or do you Malic? I think I do it,

Malik Russell:

I believe you do.

Shanta Pressley:

Okay, so hearing the proposed budget, which includes the salaries of leadership and staff and operations team, I move that we have accept the budget that has been presented.

Erin:

I [inaudible 02:40:35]

Ellen:

I'll second that, and I'm sorry, Erin.

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Aaron:

No, Aaron. Wins. Because she was on, video and news was not. yeah [crosstalk 02:40:46]

Erin:

Yeah.

Ellen:

Gotcha. I'll second. And I, thank guys so much,

Shanta Pressley:

Jessie.

Jessie:

Hi.

Shanta Pressley:

Harry.

constants:

Hi.

Shanta Pressley:

Erin.

Erin:

Hi.

Shanta Pressley:

Nush.

constants:

Hi.

Shanta Pressley:

Sophia.

constants:

Hi.

Shanta Pressley:

Constants.

constants:

Hi.

Aluda.

Aluda:

Hi.

Shanta Pressley:

And Kamaria.

Melissa Alston:

Hi.

Shanta Pressley:

Thank you. All right. Awesome. So that is about 65 to 70% of our budget and we look forward to hearing the rest in the coming months and that our teachers and staff members are happy.

Malik Russell:

Thank you greatly appreciate it. Let's see. We go back to the agenda.

Shanta Pressley:

Yes.

Malik Russell:

Great. Appreciate that. And then, oh, so that we have to go through the timeline and then Do I go through the timeline now.

Shanta Pressley:

If we can review that high level. So we'll know when we're voting on the rest of the budget, that would be helpful.

Malik Russell:

Okay, great. Melissa, can you walk through the timeline?

Melissa Alston:

Sure. So we are now that you all have voted on the salaries and the orchard changes. We appreciate that greatly. That is putting us right in the proper spot here. So what we're going to be focused on next is having those individual conversations. Just making sure that if we're needing to just Malic myself, if we're needing to provide more context or if you would like details, that's what's happening now until the end of April here. And then we are looking to eventually have the full board approve the full budget by the end of me would be great if we could do it earlier. And we're, focused on getting it to you in a readable fashion way before that. And we're, right on track with that as well. So we're doing a really great job with our timeline here.

Malik Russell:

Okay, thanks. So I appreciate that.

Shanta Pressley:

Awesome. Thanks Melissa. So I'm going to go through this really quick as far as quarterly strategic update. So as the pleasure and the leader of the finance committee, I know we have set strategic goals as a full board. However, I have carved out some that I would love the finance committee to work on. I have five and I'm just going to quickly go through them and that will be our guiding light if you will, until the new year. And hopefully transition that either to the new leader or I'll keep pushing those forward. So the first strategic, excuse me, first strategic goal is to provide financial resources necessary to sustain new Watson. The second is established ways to measure financial success for the organization. The third is to identify grant and funding opportunities for our facilities and educational programs. The fourth is to track donors and cultivate new ones. And this, I am proposing as a co-lead with the externally committee and the fifth would be to manage our bank debt, especially as we look into expansions. So these are something I hope that we can start working on as a committee soon and yeah, to keep our school growing and glowing, thank so much for your time. And it is an honor to serve as your treasuring leader of the finance committee. I turned it back over to Malic.

Malik Russell:

My mute game was really off. Thanks so much, appreciate that Shanty. It was really, appreciated and great, and also really a solid foundation we keep building on. So I appreciate that. And so now I will turn it over to the illustrious Ellen 10 for the ed [inaudible 02:45:22] committee update.

Ellen:

I do think that you Kurt and Mr around have covered a lot of the academic topics that we've talked about. And I think for the academic committee, there, are the top three goals that we all are here to achieve is to aiming towards achieving the charter renewal goals, right? As well continue out hour believed and teaching and learning method is to really create independent thinking, which bill into our three pillars. The self advocacy is huge. And I think that is one of the goals that I think through academic and through learning how to read and analyze things and to think for ourselves is huge as well as to work closely with the relationships' committee to raise a little fun in order to really provide our scholars as much opportunities as we can through many projects that I think that our principles and executive directors have in mind. Yeah. Those are my top three goals. More, than happy and welcome to hear from other board members. Yeah. Thank you guys.

Malik Russell:

Thank you, Allen. Really appreciate that. Anyone has any thoughts? Questions? Okay, great. And so next I will move to a first.

Aluda:

Good evening, everybody. Nope. Nobody's going to say good evening.

Malik Russell:

Back. Good evening.

[Crosstalk 02:48:06].

Aluda:

Evening.

Malik Russell:

Yeah. Yeah. Woo, woo.

Aluda:

No problem. Quick question. I know this month was supposed to be my month to discuss what goals I'm working on in terms of per goals. Do I do that now? Or is there a different section for that?

Jessica Boulet:

That's on the governance committee because it's the governance committee initiative, but if it's related, feel free to shoot horn it in.

Aluda:

No, not a problem. So with regards to, I don't have any updates right now for the external relations committee. Unfortunately, due to some time weeks that I've had in my own personal life, I was unable to have our meeting this month. But within that I know I was speaking with Aaron during our governance committee meeting regarding the conversation that I had with Malic and Melissa, which was a very fruitful one in terms of the direction we want to move in terms of marketing and how publicity and putting the school out there. And so I want to meet with the committee and we'll discuss that further this month. So I do apologize.

Erin:

Yeah. I Malic.

Malik Russell:

Once again, that was great. I said some great stuff, real, big things, but yeah, no problem Luda. I appreciate that and appreciate your thoughtfulness. We are going to be spending more time focus on this as we go to expansion concepts. And so there'll be a lot more to say regarding these, concepts as we go forward. Anybody have any questions? Thoughts, comments, next we'll go Tabor and the nominating committee.

Jessie:

Good evening, everyone. I hope everyone's Thursday is going well. So our strategic goals continue to be, to enhance the onboarding and orientation for the new members, as well as recruiting for new members specifically with skills in fundraising and also someone from the community, whether it's a parent of the school or a member of the surrounding community. I do have two possible candidates that I'm in communications with. Both of which have fundraising experience. I have not been successful in finding any members of the community that are interested in joining this board, but I continue to support to lean on you all for support and recommendations and referrals for anyone that you may think would be interested and would be a good candidate for consideration. And then also I just want to point out that part of the enhancing of the onboarding and orientation is to ensure that current and perspective new board members know their roles and what's expected of them and the commitment levels that's needed to run this board efficiently. And that is my update so far. So back over to you Malic,

Malik Russell:

Thank you, Barry, appreciate that. And we'll make sure that we stay a partnership with you regarding the recruitment efforts. And with that, I will now move to Aaron for our facilities committee update.

Aaron:

Yeah. Great. Thanks Malic. So reminder for folks, we, this is a board authorized Ad hoc committee under our bylaws. We went ahead and reauthorized this for this year as basically a support mechanism as senior leadership started down the path of considering expansion options. So, that's why this is here in that vein. I'm going to the strategic goals of this committee are really just exactly what the strategic goals of the school are. There's no need to overlay anything over that. And I'm, going to hold updates on that until, later.

Malik Russell:

All right. Thank you, Aaron. Appreciate that. Do we have any questions? Thoughts, comments. All right. Thanks thought then I will turn it back over to Eric to regarding public comments.

Aaron:

Great. Thank you very much. So this is the public comments portion of our board of trustee meeting. The board of trustees has an approved public comment policy that can be found on the board's website. I do not believe that I see any members of the public present here this evening, but please let me know if I've missed you. Okay. So hearing none, we will close out this portion and move ahead. Thanks Mike.

Malik Russell:

Thanks. I appreciate that. And with that, we will now move on to board governance and turn on Jessica.

Jessica Boulet:

All right. So I'll just start by moving to approve February board meeting minutes.

Erin:

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

Jessica Boulet:

Thanks, Aaron.

Erin:

Kamaria

Hi.

Jessica Boulet:

And then [inaudible 02:54:06] then Erin.

Erin:

Hi.

Hi.

Jessica Boulet:

So Sophia then Shante.

Erin:

Hi.

Jessica Boulet:

Hi

And Aluta ,Constance. Kaari

Erin:

Hi.

Jessica Boulet:

Hi. Oh, Kaari all right. That's okay. We'll put him as abstaining for the moment. Right. Great. Oh, and now ATA [inaudible 02:55:02] your starring role.

PART 5 OF 8 ENDS [02:55:04]

Jessica Boulet:

Now Aluta your starring role. So this is again, the monthly trustee individual goal setting review, which is a horrible title. And I guess I'll work on that. I'll add that to my to-do list, but this is just the part where somebody shares what has been their personal trustee journey, what are they learning? What are they interested in? What's been going on for them in their personal development trustee life over the last month or so. So Aluta go right ahead.

Aluda:

Well, so part of the stuff that I've been working on as of late, is really working on self in terms of having... It's kind of related to what we were talking about earlier in the meeting with Malik's message this morning but personal growth, internally mastering the emotions, mastering thought and strategy. So there's a couple books that I've been reading or audio books rather that I've been listening to kind of help me get there. One of them being Stillness Is Key. That's a book by Ryan Holiday, there we go. So Stillness Is Key, talks about stoicism and how it can be effective for individuals in terms of managing the many different conflicting things that happen in life, whether it be work, family, personal relationship wise and whatnot.

And then the other book that I'm currently into right now is Mastery of Self by, I'm trying to remember the author, Don Miguel Ruiz. There we go. He's the gentleman who also wrote The Four Agreements. So that's kind of what really what I've been working on, trying to stay calm even during times of conflict or times of conflicting things that are going on, that require attention.

Jessica Boulet:

That's amazing. Thank you. Thank you, Aluta. Yeah, I'm not a believer in horoscopes, but it kind of feels like, I don't know, I've been in a similar place lately. I know a lot of people who also have been talking about their personal journey. So I don't know if it's COVID or the stars, but I feel like we're in a personal growth phase of the small universe of New York City perhaps.

Aluda:

The funny thing actually, I was watching recently the show on Disney+ with Will Smith, I believe it's called the Earth. I don't remember the title of it. But it was just talking about how fast the world moves just in retrospect to the universe, how quickly it spins around its own axis and moves through space. And I kind of thought about that and related that to how fast things move in New York City alone. So putting those two things together, it's like we're moving at a feverish pace and it's good to slow down sometimes.

Jessica Boulet:

Yeah. I also appreciate you bringing this because I feel that the look at the holistic person, as what they bring to their professional life and like bringing your whole self, is something that gets overlooked and is so, so important. So I love that. And the other one thing I wanted to say is that we keep having these conversations about everybody's reading really cool books. So if anybody else is interested in a list of cool books that other board members are reading, email me and I will absolutely start that list.

Aluda:

The board book club.

Jessica Boulet:

I don't want to put any obligations on it. I'm a serial book club joiner. But I want a list.

Malik Russell:

Alright. That was great. I appreciate that Aluta as well.

Aluda:

No problem.

Malik Russell:

So next we're going to go to well, one, I want to give one thought on the Aluta content. It really did make me think of Einstein's concept of relativity is less about physics and more about philosophy. But that's insane. But I want to now give that over to Jessica, to go over the board flywheel, which we've been anxiously waiting for. Excited and anxious for.

Jessica Boulet:

Yeah. I'm really excited about this. Thank you Melissa for pulling that up. And so I guess we'll just start out. So the first half are slides that Melissa has already shared with us. They're reflections on... [inaudible 03:00:23] reflections. They're the notes that were taken from our retreat. So just to kind of back up to refresh people's minds or let people know who weren't able to make the retreat, basically we all received this book, this little booklet on fly wheels. Which is generally the concept of kind of for every successful organization, there is a virtuous circle of value essentially. Like if you do this thing, then you

have momentum for this thing and it goes around and around. And by working on each of those spokes of your flywheel, you create organizational momentum and strength and success. Malik, if you want to correct anything about what I said, now's the time.

Malik Russell:

No, no. I think flywheel like all things else looks like your interpretation. No, but what you said makes sense. It is as a concept of what are we good at? What do we want to be good at? Are we doing it? And does it make sense?

Jessica Boulet:

Yes. Also lends great strategic clarity, which is I think the major value add that it has for us at this point in our board and school organizational life. So how we approached this at the retreat is that we brainstormed as a group what are the successes of the board? What are the things that we've been kind of disappointed in or maybe we felt we're kind of failures? And then kind of working from there to think about what makes our board work? What is that kind of cycle of inputs that creates our successes and when it's missing our failures. So this was kind of our rough brainstorm. We did not get that much time to work on it. So this is where we started. And it was a really great foundation for myself and for Ellen and for Aaron who all kind of put in some thought into the draft of the flywheel you're about to see.

So just one other note. So this flywheel that we're presenting is the first full draft of the cycle. And the reason to present it now is because we really want for everybody to have a chance for this full month to kind of really engage with it and look into it. And see how they feel about it, have ideas about it, share them and then we'll have a final draft that we officially will vote on next month. So here's list of successes, things that we felt went right. We have a new leadership structure we found and put in place the right leaders. We went independent from our CMO. We have a diverse board that feels really cohesive, very growth oriented, very thoughtful. We felt that our pandemic response was really strong and that we worked together at this point like a well oiled machine, I think was the term.

And then the next slide for the failures and disappointments, we feel like our academics are still not where we want them to be. We want to have greater engagement with the community, with parents. We need a succession plan and all that means. And if we're lucky, Aaron may share a little bit more of his big picture ideas about what a succession plan means later on in the flywheel. And then we talked about trustee engagement with the board and having kind of clear sort of on ramps and off ramps for levels of engagement, as trustees have more and less time that they can engage with the board and making that kind of a more navigable space. And then feeling like maybe there were some holes we wanted to fill in the board. So this is our brainstorm.

Next slide. And then, so when we started working on the flywheel, these are kind of like some of the ideas we had about what is actually important, what are the common themes that can make us successful? The fact that we have shared standards, we have a good process for collaboration and kind of taking into account diverse ideas, prioritizing talent recognition, recruitment retention of the right people, operationalizing our core identity. That was kind of a phrase that I think it caught a lot of people's imaginations. And kind of our ability to adapt and change through different conditions that we have faced both in the outside world and internally. And the fact that we are all really committed to putting our organization and our mission, our brand first.

So next slide. Oh, can we actually go to the next slide, Melissa? I think this is Melissa. Sorry. If it's not Melissa, I apologize. So I wanted to put this up first, because this is the flywheel that the school put together and that they shared at the retreat school leadership. And it's really great. And it's a really

important reference for us I think, as we think about our board flywheel obviously, because they are interconnected. So they had unyielding... I'll just present it quickly unless Malik or somebody else wants to present it for the school.

Malik Russell:

All right. So we'll start and I'll make sure everybody gets involved. So I'll just start with the first one. A yielding belief in the talent and potential of our scholars and community, that is at the basis of both our pillars admission. And then Melissa, you can say the next.

Melissa Alston:

The next one is identify, attract, recruit, retain and develop mission aligned staff. So that's really important because we're not just waiting for the staff to come to us, we're out there looking for the best talent. And we also are not going to say, "Oh, well, we don't have a position available," if someone we think is a shining star and is going to contribute to us. We're going to make sure that we are dynamic and we're not turning anyone away that we feel like will push us forward.

Malik Russell:

The next I'll have Mr. Brown.

Anthony Brown:

Yes. Create a community of innovation and creativity throughout the entire organization. I'm having a hard time seeing this next. Oh, school design, operations, culture and pedagogy.

Malik Russell:

The next, I will turn it off to Mr. Davidson.

Kurt Davidson:

All right. Deliver a world class scholar centered instruction. So this is the meat of what we're doing. We're teaching kids, so progressive learning focused on critical thinking. This is really where our mission and three pillars come alive obviously embedded throughout. But you see it having engaging instruction along with culturally responsive instruction. So thinking back to the work that's been done on the board and school level with DEI, along with just how we approach our community from asset based mindset.

Malik Russell:

And next I'll go with deliberate reflection for the purpose of continuous growth and improvement. And this was something that we thought was really core to everything we do, what we think we need and what we think we need to do as individuals and as an organization. And deliberate reflection means purposeful. It means thoughtful. It means despite other things that might hold you back continually doing that. And it's for the purpose of growth, not for the purpose of putting yourself down, not for the purpose of putting yourself up. It's for the purpose of growing as an organization and improving. And then I will leave the last one to, and this is just on the fly, to both Kurt and Mr. Brown will do together.

Anthony Brown:

All right. I'll start it out.

Kurt Davidson:

We love it.

Anthony Brown:

Transcendent outcomes for our scholars and community. Academic, socio-emotional, empowerment, creative change agents.

Kurt Davidson:

And so I think for me this is... I mean, it's a wheel, so it's continually turning. But after we've, set up the system, we've created the community we've brought in the right people, we're executing great instruction, we're reflecting all this on all of the work that we're doing it really turns into outcomes. And obviously academic outcomes, related to outcomes that are of the core focus, but it's not just that it gets into the true thought around what is empowerment. And empowering our kids to be those creative change agents so that they're the ones that are able to make change. They're not just folks that are on the sidelines watching things happening. They're the ones that are truly making the change there. And then obviously circling back to the belief. What else, Mr. Brown?

Anthony Brown:

I think that's it. I mean, just quickly I'll just say it's holistic. I mean, our transcendent outcomes, the innovation creativity is, it not only just directly impacts our scholars but it impacts everyone as part of our organization. Makes everyone move toward those outcomes. It pushes everyone to be more innovative and creative. So everyone gets better within our community.

Malik Russell:

And that's our visitation of the Nuasin's Flywheel. Thank you, Jessica.

Jessica Boulet:

That was beautiful. As beautiful the second time as the first time. So just to stay on this flywheel for a little bit more, just to continue taking a close look at it. What you may notice if you take a look at each of these spokes on the flywheel, is that they each represent kind of a really core element of what an organization, what a school means, right? So you look at the first one, the unyielding belief in the talent and potential of our scholars and community. That's kind of a mission statement, right? Yeah. It's a mission statement. It's a core value. And then you have next, what you're talking about there, is you're talking about people. The people that mobilize that, right? Then you have, create a community of innovation and creativity. That's kind of the structural environment that allows people to excel, that allows them to contribute their best.

And then you move over, you've got kind of the core action. And I think Kurt, you even said this is kind of like the meat, right, of what we deliver. And then finally moving up, you have kind of this constant monitoring and evaluation. Kind of evaluation and recalibration of what you're doing in an ongoing way. And then finally you have kind of the core of your outcome. The thing that proves the whole... It's kind of like the proof of everything going well and then feeds right back into the mission statement. And so kind of breaking it down in those categories was really helpful for us when we were looking at trying to figure out what the rest of our board flywheel looks like and try to mirror that.

And then a couple other just notes, that kind of revelations that we had going through this is one, I think like the sequential arrows of this wheel and also a little bit the nature of every spoke, kind of

makes you subconsciously believe like, this is chronological. It's like a timeline. But it was really important for us in attacking this to realize that it is not a timeline. It's not like you do one and then two. You do two and then three. These things are constantly reinforcing one another. And what that flow is, what those arrows really represent is kind of support or added value. So you look at that mission statement at the beginning, and if you have that strong mission, that's like your first value that you're adding to this world. You're like, this is what the world needs. And then from that value that you've given to the world, you get back a resource, right?

You put out that mission there and then people come, the people who believe in that. And you have to find them. But they come and then together that's a new resource. And what are you doing with that resource? You're creating structural environment. You're adding value to that group of people, to create this environment where they can thrive. And then that environment gives you the resources you need to take the actions, et cetera, et cetera. So that was kind of the second big principle. And then thirdly, actually if you can go back to the prior slide Melissa? I forgot.

Oh, thirdly. The other thing that you will notice looking at Nuasin or at the school flywheel, is that it really does reflect Nuasin's unique value add, unique identity. The things that are really special to us and make us who we are. So those were kind of like the three things that we really wanted this flywheel to reflect. So now forward, and we can go to the actual flywheel. All right. So I'll just read through these really quickly and then kind of try and explain a little bit the thought that went into picking these. And I'll emphasize again this is a draft. There's a lot of kind of back and forth and is this right? I don't know. We could also do it this way. So I really do look forward to everybody engaging with this tonight and in the next month and thinking to yourself like, maybe we really need to say this word instead of this other word, because that's a better reflection of who we are or what we want to be. So with that as a preference.

So the first two were our little bit of expansions on what we put together at the retreat. But so the mission is to affirm or is that we affirm or kind of the mission piece, is that we as a board, we actively affirm our shared values, vision and purpose. And I put in the pillars here, because I thought that really fit about what is uniting us. But that could also be something else. So, self advocacy, rigor and community. And that really felt right. And then the little re, is just reaffirm, because we'll be going around and around.

And so with that mission statement around the world, we bring people together, board members and school leadership. Because school leadership is also a really important contributor to our board culture, right? So that's how we maintain and strengthen a diverse representative and mission driven board. And so we said in the retreat diverse, but representative we added because I think it's a reflection that we're not just being diverse to be diverse. We're not just like, "Oh, let's have lots of different people." It's because we want to be good representatives of our Nuasin community. It's for this community. And then mission driven, I think self explanatory but also was prompted by my review of the school flywheel. Very important.

Next is that we have this environment. So we said, create a working culture and operational framework for strategic partnership between trustees, school leadership and school community. So I'll break each of those down. So operational framework it's our policies and procedures, it's our roles and our responsibilities. But examples of what that means, like what we're doing already for example is, we have our committees that we've chosen. What committees do we want? Every year when we go over the bylaws, we've decided to do biennial or retreats when we do evaluations, self-assessments that whole cycle. These are all kind of the processes we put in place to help us do our best. Right?

And then the working culture is really important. And it's a reflection of what Malik, I think rightly is always emphasizing, is that the framework it's the foundation and the pillars of the house. But

what makes the house a house, the quality of the house is when you actually build out the interior and the walls. And maybe this is a bad metaphor, but it's the wind in the sails. It brings the framework to life. And that's what having a good culture is really essential to making the environment what it is. And then the strategic partnership, I can try to explain it. But Aaron, I know this is close to your heart. So if you want to expand on it here, it is your chance.

Aaron Bothner:

Just to note that the purpose of an exemplar board is not to just hand down a mandate and then show up at the end of the year. I think the most value should really be extracted from a board in the middle, as a partner to senior leadership along the way. Which takes many shapes and forms and of course respects the division between board and management. But point being here that we're all in this together. And not that it's a set it and forget it kind of a relationship.

Jessica Boulet:

Lovely. oh, I also didn't know if you wanted to add in your thoughts on the succession planning Aaron, since that is an important part of the strategic structuring.

Aaron Bothner:

Yeah. No, you guys have heard me say this a hundred times. So just a chance to remind everyone that succession planning means so much more than just thinking about who your next leader is from the board perspective and from senior leadership perspective. A really good succession plan involves being really thoughtful about how you're developing and cultivating people throughout the organization. So that is why for an organization that has built itself around the development of people in the constituencies it serves, that's why that part to me is so crucial.

Jessica Boulet:

So the last piece just kind of breaking out trustees, school leaderships, school community, want to point out what a strategic partnership or relationship looks like between trustees, between trustees and school leadership, between trustees and school community. They're all going to look very different, but we felt it was important to put it all under strategic partnership because it is important to remember we are all partners in this enterprise, in our different ways. And so trustee relationships with each other, developing different relationships with school leadership like in committee meetings and in meetings and in retreats. And the way that school leaders also lead in that process as well. And then kind of like school community might look like for example, visiting the school. That's a core part. Maybe we have that parent board member, maybe we do a walk through the neighborhood. Maybe you look up the city council representative and you say like, "Oh, well what have you done for our school lately or for Highbridge?" That type of engagement.

And so, taking that environment, then we go to kind of what we felt was the core action, the core meet of what the board is here for. And that's through open communication between trustees, school leaders and school community. Again, with each of those looking different. We frame clear holistic goals and map out strategy and tactics for achieving them. And I think the only thing to point out here, is kind of the open communication bit. It's participatory, it's collaborative, these are all words that came to my mind at least. But again, that strategic partnership aspect, the communicative partnered approach to this, these felt like really core to the mission and the values that we've set out to our pillars. I'm going to be cutesy now, but if you think about self advocacy, meanings like putting yourself out there. And then community means drawing strength from your community and returning strength to

your community. And then rigor is holding yourself and your community to a high standard. If you think about what that looks like in practice, I think it's collaboration. That's my spiel on that one. Or cooperation, or partnership.

And then the evaluation and calibration piece is you maintain an ongoing dialogue again and reflection around your results. Your metrics that you choose with periodic holistic evaluations and adjustments as needed. And then finally your outcomes is that... What we want to see at the end is that we've empowered individuals within Nuasin and that should include ourselves as board members. And through this empowering the school's greater community through strong academic and social outcomes for our scholars and families. It was interesting to me actually, I didn't review the school's flywheel before writing this, but it was interesting that the academic and social outcomes, we put that in there. And then I went back to the school and it was like, "Oh yeah, academic and social outcomes. That's nice." So we're aligned.

And yeah. So in terms of just what empowerment looks, I think for us as trustees, and I don't know, maybe one of the tweaks to this one is that we should explicitly mention ourselves. So that's important too. But we felt it was also important to center the scholars and their families in the outcomes that we're looking for as well, because we can't be successful unless that's who's succeeding. But when we're looking at ourselves at this stage, we ask what are we learning as we have moved through this flywheel a couple times and how are we more empowered as a board and as individual trustees than when we started? So that's kind of the idea behind that. And then those outcomes again, they reinforce and they drive forward our mission, our core pillars.

So again, just as you all engage with this, if anybody has any burning questions or thoughts now, definitely you can say them. But I think especially for time purposes, but also because it should be something that takes a bit more thought, I would encourage you to email me or call me or text me or whatever, over the course of this next meeting or over the course of this next month. And if there's enough interest for further discussion, we can also put some time together in the governance committee to discuss that. But kind of just generally speaking, I would say as you're looking at this, this month think about which of these feel right for you? What does this mean to you when you look at it really.

Take a look at it with respect to the school's flywheel. Does it have that good resonance? Take a look at the flywheel book again. Kind of check off all the things, which I did. And that was actually kind of informative also, because again, I waited until after we had done the flywheel for me to look at the book again. And I was like, "Oh yeah, we did include all these things. Good for us." Oh, next slide please.

So I would say kind of the final metrics that we can target are, first, when we do have our final spokes, if we fail in any of these things, can we still succeed as a board without that? And if the answer is, "No, we can't," then that thing definitely needs to be in the flywheel. That's good. And if the answer is, "Yeah, we could still succeed without it," then we should take it out. It's not essential. And then secondly, if we only do the things in our flywheel, can we still succeed? And if the answer is yes, then the flywheel is complete. And then final slide.

Like I mentioned in the beginning, I personally found this actually really helpful to go through this process. And I think that's the point of it. So I just kind of put together kind of some reflection questions that came to my mind as I was doing this and that were helpful to me. And I wanted to share them with you. So one question that I reflected on a lot is, how did the process of putting together our flywheel, our discussion at the retreat and kind of where Ellen and Aaron in my discussion, where we kind of got hung up, how does that reflect where we are as a board? What ones were really easy to name and which ones were we like, "Oh, what do we put?" I think that to me, that really reflected what we're really good at now and what we maybe want to work on. And then also-

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Jessica Boulet:

We want to maybe want to work on. Also, I'm going to be looking back at this and thinking about, "Of all of these, what are our priorities in this flywheel? What are we going to put first?" And then, sorry, moving all of your pictures around so I can read this slide. Thinking about each of those spokes in relation to what we identified as our successes and failures at the retreat.

And then thirdly, kind of which one of those spokes do we feel strongest in right now and which one are the greatest opportunities. The best bang for our buck, so to speak. But if we focus on that, we'll see a big leap forward. I think everybody's thoughts on that are going to be really, really valuable, especially as we are looking forward to our strategic planning for the coming year.

Malik Russell:

Thank you, Jessica.

Jessica Boulet:

Thank you for putting together this activity. Thank you.

Malik Russell:

I appreciate it. I really do appreciate your engagement and I will not lie that both me and Melissa were very suspect whether you guys would come up with the final thing for us to do this week, but I really do appreciate how thoughtful you were in it.

Very quickly, as I know we are all on time ... For time, I do want to say that, don't let this work go to waste. We thought about it. We thought about it in a really thoughtful way. That's how we came up with it. Doesn't mean it's to be all end all, but it does mean that we thought about it as a group and thought about it in a deliberate way. We have to make sure that we allow that thought to influence us and allow us to become a greater organization. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Jessica Boulet:

Absolutely. And like I said, I personally got a huge amount of value out of it. Thank you.

To do my quarterly strategic update for the governance committee, I just really have two major buckets here that I'm thinking about. I think for the governance committee, whether I continue to be the chair or not, I think a huge focus is going to be strengthening and solidifying the current practices that we've gotten in place over the last year.

Maybe think of them as monitoring or capacity building cycles, not sure. But the open meeting [inaudible 03:32:58] check in, the retreat. Not that governance committee did anything much for the retreat. It was great though. The individual trustee development and relationships within the board.

Major, major piece is this CEO evaluation process as we are still getting those foundational pieces right. Just solidifying that. The other major thing is strategic planning. Clarifying and strengthening our flywheel, whether by looking at the document or in general thinking about, "What does success look for us and how do we break that down?" I think those are conversations that will be clarified further in governance committee over the next month. But those, I think, are the big buckets that governance committee is going to have to tackle in the coming year.

Malik Russell:

Thank you for that update. Much appreciated. Anybody have any questions, comments, thoughts?

Okay, great. Thank you so much, Jessica. Appreciate that. What do we have next on the ... Okay, great.

I want to just start by I want to say one thing, that Aaron definitely was in charge of this entire thing. That's why we went over time. Cause I have had a whole record of being under time. Therefore, we can't be overtime unless I wasn't in charge. I want to give Aaron a lot of thanks for putting this together and made us go overtime. I appreciate that.

Separately, unless we have any questions or other things, I'll let us move towards the executive session. Aaron, I'll let you push us towards that as this is your meeting, the entire thing. Thank you.

Aaron Bothner:

Interesting approach there. We do have an executive session on the agenda tonight. This will wrap the public portion of the meeting. I'll make the motion here shortly.

Ellen, do we still have your invite? It's on my calendar still, but may want to recirculate invite for the exec session. Or Malik, do you have that set up elsewhere? I forget.

Malik Russell:

Not sure. I don't think I did that. I think I should have done it, but I did not.

Ellen:

I have something on my calendar, if it's what you're talking about from. Eight o'clock until 11:30. Is that the one?

Aaron Bothner:

Yep. [Crosstalk 03:36:16].

Malik Russell:

Can you send that to Melissa so she can send that to [crosstalk 03:36:24]?

Ellen:

Yeah, let me do that right now.

Aaron Bothner:

Then Melissa, are you able to have me co-host so that you don't have to come back to this session to close it out?

Malik Russell:

Yep.

Melissa:

Yes.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. Reminder to everybody of the logistics here, I'll make the motion, we'll vote to approve the motion. Once we do that, I'll hold this open. Ellen is recirculating now the login information for the executive session. I think you have to do this anyway, but please make sure you log out of this one and then log to that and we will take it from there.

Ellen:

Melissa, can you check if you got the invite? I just resent it.

Melissa:

Yes, I can check.

Malik Russell:

I also dropped it in the chat.

Ellen:

Got it? Okay, great. Thank you.

Aaron Bothner:

Okay. Any logistics questions before we ... All right. That said, I propose that we move into executive session for the purpose of discussing two items: one is personnel changes, the other is purchasing of real estate property.

For the latter, I'm going to invite guests Malik Russell, Kurt Davidson, Anthony Brown, Melissa Alston, to attend with us. Malik, let me know if I missed anybody for that. Oh, and Dan Pasik as well.

Malik Russell:

And Keisha should be ... I'm sorry, the latter is which portion of it?

Aaron Bothner:

The real estate property discussion.

Malik Russell:

Yes. That would be the first place and I think Keisha should be involved in that as well.

Aaron Bothner:

Keisha did not mean to overlook you. I apologize. You were absolutely-

Malik Russell:

Need to do that.

Aaron Bothner:

Keisha, make sure you add yourself to the list of guests. Thank you. For the former, the guests will be, I believe, Malik, Russell. That's it, right?

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Malik Russell:

Dan as well.

Aaron Bothner:

Include Dan as well. Okay. Dan Pasik for that. Long motion. Do I have a second?

Ellen:

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

Jessica Boulet:

I'm in one.

Aaron Bothner:

Hi. I heard aye. Anoush?

Anoush:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Constance?

Constance:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Sophia?

Sophia:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Kamaria?

Kamaria:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Alouda?

Alouda:

Aye.

Aaron Bothner:

Did I miss anybody?

Khari:

Aye. I got my eye on the last vote, Jessica.

Jessica Boulet:

I was just trying to say, "Not me," because I was not sure if I got heard.

Aaron Bothner:

Let's vote-

Jessica Boulet:

Oh, you mean on the minutes.

Aaron Bothner:

Go ahead and migrate over. I'll see everybody in exec session here in a couple minutes. Thank you.

Malik Russell:

Be swift, please. (Silence).

PART 7 OF 8 ENDS [04:05:04]

Aaron Bothner:

(silence).

Wow, I am very close to that. Everybody should be able to unmute themselves. I think I did it right, but chat me if you can't.

Shanta Pressley:

Yep. I'm clear.

Aaron Bothner:

Perfect. All right. I just need one more so we can actually vote with a quorum. Okay. We're officially at quorum. So, motion to adjourn the meeting at 11 on the dot.

Speaker 3:

I.

Shanta Pressley:

Okay. I.

Jessica Boulet:

I.

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Speaker 5:

I.

Speaker 4:

I.

Constance Barnes:

I.

Aaron Bothner:

Have a great night. I'll see everybody in April. Thank you so much.

Constance Barnes:

Good night.

Sophia Huda:

Good night.

Speaker 5:

Bye.

PART 8 OF 8 ENDS [04:32:40]