

Lorna James-Cervantes, President
Dr. Alain Bengochea, Secretary
Jaime Gonzales, Treasurer
Nicole Thompson, Officer
Dachresha Harris, Officer
Dr. Ale Moore, Officer
Heather Nay, Officer
Meli Pulido, Officer

Miriam Benitez, Executive Director



**Strong Start Academy Board Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2023
5:00 PM**

**CLV Strong Start Academy Elementary Schools, Inc. Board Meeting –
July 13th, 2023**

Lorna: Good evening, everybody. I'd like to call the meeting of the Strong Start Academy Elementary School Board to order at this time. It's July 6th at 5:00 p.m. And we'll begin our meeting tonight by calling attendance. So, this is Lorna James-Cervantes, present. Jaime Gonzalez?

Jamie: Present.

Lorna: Meli Pulido? Not present. Heather Nay?

Heather: Present.

Lorna: Alain Bengochea? Not present. Nicole Thompson?

Woman: Not present.

Lorna: Dachresha Harris?

Dachresha: Present.

Lorna: Ale Moore?

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Alee: Present.

Lorna: Okay. Thank you, we have... We have quorum for the meeting tonight. And at this time, we will open the floor for public comment during this portion of the agenda. Public comment must be limited to matters on the agenda for action. Was there any public comment e-mailed or sent in? None? And I see nobody in the room wishing to give public comment.

So, we will move on to item number 1(d), and this is approval of our minutes. I think...hope everybody had the opportunity to review the minutes from our May 11th board meeting. And were there any corrections or additions to those minutes? The only thing I noted myself was that, it was a very small thing, but when Miriam was giving her report during the meeting about the recruitment on page 6. I think that should be Stupak Community Center, with an S at the beginning. So, that's the only small thing I noted that we should correct on the minutes.

Woman: It's not the Tupac Community...

Lorna: Yeah, it's not the Tupac Community Center. Yeah. It's Stupak. So, if we could just make that. Then otherwise, if anybody would like to make a motion to approve the minutes as corrected.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. I motion to approve the minutes.

Lorna: Okay, thank you. Is there a second?

Alee: Alee Moore. I approve. I second, sorry.

Lorna: Thank you. That's okay. All right, it's been moved and seconded that we approve the minutes as corrected. All those in favor?

Woman: Aye.

Woman: Aye.

Woman: Aye.

Woman: Aye.

Lorna: Any opposed? Okay. Thank you so much. At this time, I would like it...I would appreciate it, if you wouldn't mind, that we move to item number 3 on our agenda tonight. This is our executive updates. And we have two reports

by our Executive Director. She, Miriam, is on vacation right now, but has tuned into our meeting tonight via computer. So, if you wouldn't mind, we'll go there, and then come back to you, Kristen, on item number 2.

So, first is item number 3(a). This is a report by the Executive Director on the status of ongoing marketing efforts, open enrollment, and recruiting.

Miriam: Miriam Benitez, for the record. Can you guys hear me okay?

Lorna: Yes.

Miriam: All right. So, for our recruiting efforts, we had two tabling events in June. And I would imagine that that slowed down because, in Vegas, not a lot is offered outdoors in June and July because of the heat. So, the two community events that we did become aware of we attended. The digital campaign continued on Google, YouTube, and Facebook.

And our enrollment. We anticipated that we would be at a much higher number by now. However, what happened was we encountered some unexpected issues that has impacted our enrollment. And what happened was in June, our website got hacked. It got hacked twice. And the first time was on June 9th. There was a security breach. During which, more than 30 web files were infected and people were redirected to a third-party phishing site. So, that took about a week to resolve. And then everything was reinstated.

And then again on June 23rd, Google notified our website's manager that our site had been compromised and all ads were temporarily blocked until the site was once again secure. And so at that time, our website manager took a series of steps not only to repair the website, but to enhance security. And one of these steps was that he migrated our website to a new host site. So, again, that took probably about a week. So, we had two weeks that we were down in June.

So, all of the issues have since been resolved. But unfortunately, it has affected our enrollment. Because at this time last year, we had a lot more activity. So, in working with Graphika, we decided that the best strategy moving forward to mitigate all of these issues was to increase the amount of impressions through our advertising on social media as well as expand the coverage to include not only our target zip codes, but adding an eight-mile radius of advertising.

And then now we're also running OTT ads. Which are essentially...they're equivalent to TV commercials, but they're delivered directly to the viewers

through streaming services, like Hulu or Peacock. And those are available in English and Spanish. And they're targeted, just like our social media, to our target zip codes.

So, this is where we're at now. And as of today, we're actually at 125 students. Which is much better than where we were at the end of the year, at like 82. But we did think we'd be higher than where we're at. And then starting next week, we're also going to start canvassing again targeted addresses of students that meet our criteria. Or our demographic, I should say.

So, are there any questions for me?

Lorna: This is Lorna. So, Miriam, we're at 125 students enrolled currently. And we need to have 180, is that correct?

Miriam: Yes. 180 was our target.

Lorna: How much traction are we seeing just already for those campaigns, those ad campaigns?

Miriam: We haven't seen much yet. Because since all of this just happened, and then we had that holiday, the Fourth of July and all of that, it just started. So, it just started this week, our new campaigns, or the expanded and the OTT.

Lorna: Thank you. Are there other questions by board members, or other recommendations by board members, as to what we could do to help increase? We're down by about 55 students?

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. I know a lot of nonprofit agencies are having back-to-school drives and back-to-school events. Is that something that we could frequent in the zip codes of which our target market is to maybe try to capture some of those parents and students, too?

Miriam: Yes. If you know of any that we don't. Amanda, she's not at our meeting today. However, Amanda does a really good job of compiling any community events that are going on, and she sends them our way. And we've attended everything that we're aware of. So, if any of you know of any, please send them my way. Because we most certainly will attend.

Alee: Alee Moore, for the record. There's one this weekend with the treasurer's office.

Miriam: Oh. Okay. Do you have a contact number for that maybe, by chance?

Alee: I do. I can e-mail it to you.

Miriam: Okay.

Lorna: This is Lorna. Thank you for those recommendations, both of you. I think it's important that we continue to just really push to get that attendance where it needs to be, the enrollment. So, we know that getting the money behind each one of those students in the seat is going to be important for the school to be able to continue to operate in the way that it should.

Any other recommendations or suggestions? We know that Miriam will continue to send us updates on...or give us updates on enrollment and recruitment. And so we look forward to seeing those recommendations coming forward. And, Miriam, if you need any assistance in the meantime, please make sure you let us know.

Miriam: Okay, thank you.

Lorna: All right. At this time, we can then go to item 3(b). This is a report by the Executive Director regarding student achievement growth data, to include MAP, i-Ready, and Evaluación del Nivel Independiente de Lectura. Not too bad, I know I've got a terrible accent.

Miriam: That was good. That was great, Lorna.

Lorna: Oh. One second, Miriam, before you start. Let...we need to make sure that the record indicates that Meli Pulido has joined the meeting. Thank you. All right. Go ahead, Miriam.

Miriam: So, I just want to double-check on your handouts. Is your first one the i-Ready?

Lorna: Yes.

Miriam: Okay. So, looking at the i-Ready results. And the i-Ready is an assessment that we choose to give. And the reason that we really love the i-Ready is because the i-Ready is much more closer...closely aligned to SBAC. So, next year, when our third graders have to take that state-mandated SBAC, this i-Ready is a really good indicator of how well they will do on the SBAC. So, we've started it this year.

And so when we compare our winter i-Ready reading results with the spring, we see that in the winter we had 54 students proficient. And moving into spring, that increased to 82 students...or 82%. In the winter, we had 44 students in yellow, which is performing one grade level below. And in the spring, we were able to reduce that to 14% only performing one grade level below. And then at the red, in the winter, it was 3%. And that one grew to 4%, which that probably was that we gained a new student from winter to spring.

For the i-Ready math results, in the winter we had 40% proficient. In the spring, we had increased that to 81%. And in the winter, we had 58% of our students performing one grade level below, and that was decreased to 16%. And then students performing two grade levels below went from 3% in the winter to 2% in the spring.

So, we did our i-Ready testing the last month of school, in May, very close to the end of the year. These are the results we were kind...we were anticipating. We worked really hard to reach this. When we look at our MAP results, these results were a little unexpected because we did not get the results that we had expected. But when we went back and we looked at all of our data and we talked to a data consultant, we really questioned effort.

Because what happened here was when we created our testing schedule for the year, the state of Nevada, Nevada Department of Ed, had not quite yet released the testing windows. So, we had created one based on what we always knew to be true, that we could test...do MAP testing all the way until the end of the year. And then, lo and behold, this year they had changed it on us and MAP testing ended in April. And so we had to quickly...we had to test...do our MAP testing in April, and we had initially planned it in May. So, there was only 21 days of instruction between our second MAP...between our winter MAP assessment and our spring. So, that may account for the data and effort. Because they had just taken it, basically, and then 21 days later they took it again.

But anyhow, when we look at our math data, we see that in kindergarten they actually went from 77% proficient down to 72%. In first grade, they went up slightly from 62% to 69%. And in second grade, they also show a decline from 41% to 35%.

And in reading, kindergarten stayed the same, 59%. And 59%, the difference is in how many scored above grade level versus just at grade level. In first grade, it was a decline from 50% to 44%. And in second grade, from 53% to 47%.

So, again, not what we were expecting. And we certainly don't think it's representative of where the kids actually were. We think the i-Ready data is more representative of where the kids are. Because the majority of our kindergartners, almost all of them, left kindergarten reading. And the same holds true for first and second grade. We were very impressed with the work they were doing. So, we think it was just a timing thing for our MAP data, which has been noted and we're correcting for next year to make sure we have equal number of instructional days between assessment.

And then we have our ENIL data. But before I move on to the ENIL data, is there any questions regarding any of these results? No? Okay. Then I'm moving on to the ENIL data.

As Lorna mentioned, the ENIL is our Evaluación del Nivel Independiente de Lectura. So, basically, it's each student's independent reading level. And so because we had not identified a language assessment back in the fall, we had been waiting on WIDA. And just as a reminder, WIDA is the assessment we use to measure students' language proficiency in English. And WIDA kept promising that they were coming out with a Spanish test, and we were waiting and waiting and waiting, and it never came out. But it's actually out...it will be out this fall. So, that's what we're going to use to measure all kids' Spanish in the fall, and then they will assess again in the spring so we can measure that Spanish proficiency overall.

So, this assessment that we took, it doesn't measure language, it just measures specifically reading. And at that, it's reading comprehension. So, we gave the students this assessment sometime in November. And then we gave it to them again in May, towards the end of the year. And so we can see, for instance, in November we had nine students score at 1A. And 1A is like a beginning kindergarten level. And so by the time we go to June, which really our kids tested in May but I grabbed this data in June, we had one student still performing at that 1A level and the eight others had moved up. So, we had 3 at the 2A, 20 at the 3A. And 3A is towards the end of kindergarten.

And then you have... Kindergarten has the widest range of level. So, that 1A, 2A, 3A is kindergarten, that V is towards the end of kindergarten, and that T is transitional. Then the blue 1A and 2A is first grade. So, you see by the end of kindergarten, we had six kids in the transitional level, three of them actually at a first-grade level, nine of them had scored in that green V, which is end of kindergarten, where they should be.

So, we do see a lot of movement where these students are...were tested in Spanish, so their reading comprehension in Spanish. And then in the first grade, you see the similar, where we started with 11 students on 3A. And then by June, we have six students that have moved up. And then it shows the progression all the way up to 1A.

And so this is just a snapshot that shows us that students were gaining proficiency in Spanish. But it's not the best measure because it's, again, reading. And what we want is a language measure. Because the language...a language measure like we're going to do next year includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening. And this is all reading. So, it doesn't account for the students that are struggling with reading. They might have more language skills, especially listening. We know that language acquisition, that the first thing that your proficiency level is in listening. But we didn't have a measure where we were assessing their listening skills. But like I said, next year we're going to administer and implement a language assessment so we will be able to capture all of those language domains and follow their language gains in all four of those domains from the fall to the spring.

Any questions on this data?

Lorna: This is Lorna, Miriam. So, you didn't...did not give this assessment in second grade because second grade was focused on English language development, that's the one group where you did not really focus on bilingual as much as just enrichment of the native language, correct?

Miriam: Yes. Thank you for bringing that up, Lorna. So, in second grade, it's an enrichment. And that enrichment is focused on teaching... So, we're not getting into, like, reading skills. It's... For instance, we had a reading unit that was on bugs. So, they would do a lot of activities and a lot of... Like integrated science on bugs and learning the vocabulary. So, everything was very

integrated, but it wasn't necessarily formally teaching them how to read in Spanish. So, it wouldn't have been a fair assessment to give the kids.

Lorna: Thank you. That's what I thought. This is Lorna again. And, Miriam, just looking at the data that you've shared with us tonight, especially looking at i-Ready data, it looks as though we would be on track as a school to meet the goals that were set forth in our charter and in our charter contract, but I wanted to verify with you that that is correct and that we should be on track to hit those goals as a school next year as long as kids have enough instructional day between each of those testing cycles.

Miriam: Yes. Miriam Benitez, for the record. We are on track. The only thing that throws us a little bit is... And this happens to everyone. Obviously, if we have the room, we accept students all throughout the year. So, like, what happened to us even in second grade, even towards the end of the year, I think we got two or three new students. And these two or three new students that joined us were severely behind, like two grade levels or more. So, obviously, we do what we can. But in a few short couple months before the end of school year, we didn't see as much growth as we would have liked. So, we always have those students that haven't been with us from the beginning that may not show the growth.

Lorna: Thank you for that, Miriam. Are there any other questions or concerns or comments by board members?

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. So, just for clarification for me, Miriam. This coming school year, we'll test the students earlier in the fall semester and measure them from the beginning of the semester to their progress at the end? Okay. And the Spanish...the language test is available for us now? Just making sure.

Miriam: Yes. Miriam Benitez, for the record. So, for our language, yes, it is available now in Spanish. And we plan on giving that assessment early, as soon as we start. So, either in August or September. And then we would give them the following...the follow-up in the spring sometime.

Dachresha: Okay. So, it's measured by the complete school year, not, like, midpoint? Because...

Miriam: Right.

Dachresha: Yes. And is that...does it have to be that way, we can't measure, like, mid-year to see what our status is? Like, to make sure...

Miriam: Well, so, the language assessment, the way that it works, it's only two. And so I can only speak to this is an assessment that we're required to give second-language learners. And so they usually have their first assessment at the beginning of the school year. And then there's a window that opens up about January and closes about February. So, we have to give our ELL students the test then. Because there's so much testing, we have to time it so we're not testing on top of testing. Because then that's when we see that we don't get good results. So, then, we were planning on giving the Spanish assessment, because the Spanish assessment will be the kids in the whole school, except our third graders next year. So, we were planning on giving them that assessment as soon as our ELL WIDA is done in English, then start with our Spanish one, which would be about March.

Lorna: This is Lorna. So, Miriam, I think what part of the question is that Dachresha is asking, and if I'm wrong tell me, is there, like, a progress monitoring of the language skills in the middle of the year, or in the middle of those two test windows, or is it more maybe formative assessments within the classroom that the teachers are using to measure the kids' language growth?

Miriam: So, that's more of a formative assessment that we're talking. And that's the work that we have started to do with Alain when he came out to the school and did a professional development to help students...or the teachers start creating formative assessments that go along with the units of study in Spanish so we can gauge that they are acquiring the target vocabulary.

Lorna: Thank you.

Dachresha: Thank you.

Lorna: Does that answer your question, Dachresha?

Dachresha: Yes. Dachresha Harris, for the record. Yes, it does. Thank you.

Lorna: Sure. And this is Lorna. Just a note for everybody, too, with the WIDA assessment that we have to give at our schools. What you're looking for for year over year is adequate growth within a child's development. So, you want to see an adequate amount of growth and you want to see children in at least the 50th percentile of growth on that assessment, or higher. And so that's...that

really should be our goal with the WIDA assessment, is that we're seeing that 50th percentile growth, or higher, for all of our students.

Good questions. Are there any other questions or comments for Miriam?

Heather: Heather Nay, for the record. I just wanted to note also on the... Not so much kindergarten, but first and second grade I remember, too, that at the beginning they were just trying to get them caught up to where they needed to be because a lot of them were COVID students. So, these scores are actually, like, really good compared to when they first started. Because I think a lot of second and first graders were at, like, kindergarten and pre-K level, if I'm remembering correctly. So, those scores, they may not look that good for first grade, but they really are. So, next year is going to be even better, I'm sure.

Lorna: This is Lorna. Thank you for that insight, too, Heather. And you're exactly right about that. And also, I think it should be noted that when you're looking at the first graders on the ENIL test, these are children who haven't had necessarily any formal education in Spanish literature or literacy. So, for them to, you know, have made growth from within that literacy, which is reading comprehension, the hardest part of reading, that really is showing some good positive growth, as well.

All right. Thank you so much for that, Miriam. At our retreat that's coming up in August, one of the things that I'm going to be asking Miriam to do is just kind of give us a reminder of what our data has shown for this past year, what our goals with the Charter Authority are, and then how close we are to meeting those goals. So, kind of just working with us on that so that we have a real understanding. And I think just continuing to give us professional development on how to understand some of these assessments is going to be important.

All right. Thank you for that, Miriam. And I know you have item number 4(a), also, I think. Correct? This is the discussion for possible action to approve the updated English-language learner policy and plan, McKinney-Vento Homeless policy and plan, and the foster care policy and plan for the Charter Authority. Is that correct?

Miriam: Yes. So, the Charter Authority... These are manuals that we had already...that the board had already approved last year right before we opened. However, last year, everything that we created, it was created from scratch. So, this year, they sent us a template and they wanted us kind of just to fill in the

blanks and use their template. And it did need to be board-approved. So, there's three policies, the foster care, the McKinney-Vento, and the English-learner policy. But the English-learner policy we need to table because that one asked for a lot more information that I need to get from the school's EL coordinator, which was on vacation. So, once he's back, he can go in there and just double check to make sure everything we're saying in that manual is accurate. But these two are ready to be approved. And so basically, it's the template provided to us by the Charter Authority and we just filled in the blanks.

Lorna: Thank you. I hope everyone had the opportunity to read through these policies prior to coming today. If not, let us know if you need a few minutes. Or if you have questions about anything that you read within the policies.

[00:32:05]

[silence]

[00:32:33]

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. Colleen, I'm sure you've vetted these inside and out. So, I didn't have any questions.

Lorna: Thank you. That is a good point. Lorna Cervantes. Our board counsel, Colleen, has reviewed both of these policies and has ensured that we're in compliance as necessary. And I, too, read over them and I didn't have any questions. I wanted to, though, just give a little bit of wait time in case. If there are no questions or concerns with either of the policies, I think we could take them both together. But we do need a motion to approve both the McKinney-Vento Homeless policy and plan and the foster care policy and plan for Strong Start.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. I motion to approve the McKinney-Vento Homeless policy plan and the foster care policy plan.

Lorna: Thank you. Is there a second to that motion?

Woman: I second.

Meli: Meli Pulido. Second.

Lorna: Thank you. So, it has been moved and seconded to approve both plans. All those in favor?

Woman: Aye.

Woman: Aye.

Woman: Aye.

Woman: Aye.

Lorna: Any opposed? Okay, that motion passes. Thank you very much.

Miriam, did I miss any other specific items that you had on the agenda tonight?

Miriam: No, I don't believe so. That covers it.

Lorna: Okay. Thank you very much. So, with that, we can go back up to the top of our agenda. And, Kristen, thank you so much for your patience. This is item number 2(a), the finance report by Kristen Deeds from EdTech on budget and finance reports. So, Kristen, we'll go ahead and turn it over to you at this time.

Kristen: Great. Thank you so much. Board members, this is Kristen Deeds, for the record. And I just have a very quick update for you of financials through May, an updated forecast. As of May 31st, we have an annual forecasted net income of \$16,446. And we are looking at a cumulative fund balance to carry over to next year of just under \$811,000, or 25.6% reserve, which is really strong.

The main change from last month to this month was pretty minor, we had about a \$5,000-dollar increase in our forecasted net income. And it had to do with a new grant that was just approved that we added for some additional special ed support. We also had a little...some turnover at the end of the year that resulted in some savings. And we had some additional textbook costs that we added to the forecast. So, overall, a net increase of \$5,000 this month.

In terms of our year to date, we have earned or received 82% of our forecasted revenues and we have expended 70% of our expenses. On the revenue side, the main areas that we have not yet earned are federal, and it's the CSP funding as well as some of the title monies. We haven't been able to submit reimbursements because those have been locked up in amendment status. So, we haven't been able to recognize that revenue yet. So, those are really the primary things. Also, the CSP grant, we did not spend everything that we anticipated spending by June 30th. So, whatever we don't spend will carry over

to next year, as will the revenue. So, we will see a shift in the revenue and expenses on CSP, and we'll include those in the fiscal year '24 forecast when we make that update.

In terms of the balance sheet, we had \$1,257,000 in assets. The majority of that was cash, cash is remaining very strong. As of May 31st, it was a \$1.1 million. And we anticipated some bigger spending in June really around the CSP and we haven't spent it quite as fast as we expected to. And your cash balance is still quite strong, as of the end of June. So, it's actually better than what we're seeing here. So, you ended June with a very strong cash balance.

In terms of our grants, we have a number of grants, as you can see. I've mentioned that titles 1 through 4 are in amendment status. And we expect to see them approved hopefully next month, we're waiting for the state to do the final approvals on those. And once we get that, we can submit the remaining expenses for fiscal year '23, as well as being able to submit any expenses that are incurred from July through September.

And on these federal grants, September 30th is the last day that we could spend on these funds for fiscal year '23. We've exhausted the special ed IDEA. And the CSP grant, we have spent about 45% of that grant as of June 30th. We have some other grants that are also in play and we'll expect to have some additional spending start to happen, or it did happen in June and will be happening after that. This is just a summary of the CSP grant and what remains. We do have until July of 2024 to spend down this grant.

And then in terms of the budget, we have not made any budget updates at this point. Our focus right now is on closing out the fiscal year '23 year end and getting ready for your first annual audit. So, at this point, we have not made any changes to the budget, but I included in the presentation just for your records and remembrance what the board-approved budget is. So, at this point, the board-approved budget is based on 180 students. We have a net income of just under \$47,000.

A couple of assumptions included here that are definitely going to change the numbers in our...when we do the updated forecast are the PCFD revenue rates. So, at the time that we approved this budget, we did not know what the final approved rates could be and we had included a 10% increase, which is about \$8,000 per student. And the final base rates for the state are \$8,966 per student.

So, we're looking at about a \$940-dollar-per-student increase, which equates to about \$170,000 of additional revenue. So, that'll be good, we'll make that change. And we'll also adjust...consider what we need to adjust in enrollment and other numbers, as well, when we go to do the forecast update next month.

Also included in this, the assumption around benefits. We assumed a 10% increase in benefit costs, and it sounds like they came in at about 4.83% increase. So, we'll probably see some savings there, as well. But we do...this is a lot of moving parts right now, we don't have final-final information on all of the staff and salaries for next year. And so there will be some changes, for sure. And we'll be sharing with you in future months updated forecasts and comparison to the approved budget as we move through the upcoming months.

Does anyone have any questions on the presentation?

Lorna: This is Lorna. I don't see any questions from anyone in the room or online. So, Kristen, thank you so much for waiting for us through the first part of the meeting and for the work that you have done. I just want to let you know also that I received a survey from EdTech and I will have that completed for you by the end of this week and back to you.

Kristen: Great. Thank you so much.

Lorna: You're welcome. Thank you for joining us tonight. All right. Seeing that there are no questions, we'll move down now to item 4(b). This was just wanting to speak to you for a minute, if you don't mind, about the proposed draft agenda or ideas that we had floating around for the August...it will be August 22nd, our board retreat. And my thought was to schedule it from 9:00 to 4:00, doesn't mean we'll take that entire time. But that was my thought. Because we know that we want to have a good amount of time during that board retreat in order to do some reminder training. Colleen has agreed to do some reminder on open meeting law, governance, things like that.

We are going to have some training from BoardOnTrack regarding our strengths and weaknesses as a board, maybe some ideas for areas that we may want to move forward. For example, creating committees, how our meetings should run, things like that. For that reason, I did send out to everybody just a little reminder that there were two different assessments in BoardOnTrack. And I sent the link for the second one because I missed it at first. So, I did send a link to everybody and ask you if you would fill that out prior to the retreat

because we'll use that data to help inform kind of some of the training that we would receive from the folks at BoardOnTrack. So, if you could do that, I'd appreciate it.

And a few of the other things we were hoping to do is really just start the day with maybe a report of what have we achieved this past year. Because I think it's always important to look back at what we've done so far and where we've come. We did a lot of work in a short time this past year as a board and as a school. And then to have maybe an in-depth look at our student achievement data, where it is, where we hope it's going to go, what our goals are for the next few years. And then that other additional training. But I'd like to ask all of you is there anything else you would like to see that we would include in that agenda? We may have a couple of small business items, like maybe the EL plan, that we need to include there, too. But are there any other things that you all would like to see at that meeting...or at that retreat? Things that you're wishing we had done, things you hope we would do.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. After taking the survey that you sent, it was like, "Oh, we have a lot of opportunities that we need to, like...we can...you know, to help us to be more cohesive and more...work at a higher level."

Lorna: This is Lorna. I had kind of a similar thought. And, you know, we're a new board, so we have a lot of...we have nowhere to go but up. And I always look at it like that. When you're starting something new, you've got...you know, you set those small goals and we meet those goals, and then we continue to move up to be that high-performing board that we would like to see. So, thank you for that comment.

Any other thoughts? I think that...I think just filling out that that assessment will really help us to guide a lot of the discussion on that day. I know it takes a few minutes. I think that what I was told is it takes about, and I have to still do it myself, it takes about 20 minutes tops to complete that assessment.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. I only did one assessment. You're telling me there's two?

Lorna: Yeah, yes.

Dachresha: I did one that took about 30 minutes. And I just had it up at work and I kept going back and forth to it because I was like, "I got to move on." But yes.

Lorna: That's probably the one that we need for the retreat, because it was a little longer. There was one that was just in your personal profile area. It's really just an assessment of what your skills are. And I think everyone had completed that. And then I sent a specific link for an assessment that was longer, so 20 to 30 minutes, on really where we are as compared to other high-performing boards. So, I'm sure that's the one that you completed.

And for everybody's information, because this was a question that I received that was a good question. On BoardOnTrack, a lot of times they refer to the "CEO." And that's really our Executive Director, or Principal, Miriam. So, and that's, you know, different groups have different terminology. So, I wanted to point that out, as well.

So, I guess my only other thought with regard to the retreat then is, since it is going to be a full-day retreat, should we plan to hold our regular August board meeting or should we just hold the few agenda items we have from that meeting, maybe we'll just place on the agenda for those few items and we just have the one meeting in August, which would be the full-day meeting? So, I'd like to get your thoughts on that, as well.

Meli: Meli Pulido. I feel that we might be able to just...might as well just do both August 22nd.

Lorna: Okay.

Meli: Join those agenda items for the August meeting into the retreat.

Lorna: Okay.

Meli: That's my idea.

Lorna: And how do others feel about that?

Heather: Heather Nay, for the record. I think that that's fair. If it's only a few items, we might as well save it for the retreat.

Lorna: Okay. Anyone else?

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. So, are we thinking to add on the meeting at the end of the retreat? Because I think the schedule that you put in place for the retreat is the schedule for us to come together, brainstorm, and see how we could be better. So, is this, like, after we get done with that, is that what we're thinking?

Lorna: It could be. I'm just throwing it out there. Colleen, did you have a recommendation?

Colleen: Colleen McCarty, board counsel. I think they should be at least there's some delineation, however you want to do it. Whether it's the first thing we do to get it out of the way or the last thing at the end of the day, I would think, just so that everybody's minds are in the right headspace.

Lorna: Okay.

Colleen: And also so that we can properly agendize it.

Lorna: Yeah, that's true. And this is a question that was asked of me. So, I said, "Well, I don't know. I'd have to ask the whole group." Alee, any thoughts on your part?

Alee: No, I concur.

Lorna: Okay. I'm wondering if Jaime, are you still with us?

Woman: He gave his thumbs up, as well.

Lorna: Oh, he did? Okay. So, I think what we could do then is I can work with Colleen and Miriam and Amanda, and we'll see how we can agendize it. If maybe it's better just to do it first thing in the morning, just work through any business we have, and then we can really be in the right place the rest of the day to really... Because the purpose of most retreats, really, is just to really think about who are we, how are we doing as a group, where do we want to go, where do we see ourselves. And so we'll do that.

And I should have said at the beginning, another piece I want to make sure we include is team building, too. Because we do have some new members and I think it's important for us to always include some team building in this kind of event.

Any other thoughts? If any of you think of anything between here and August 22nd that you would like to see if we can include on the retreat agenda, please send it forward. Because I'd love to have your thoughts on it. Alain did work with me a little bit on the agenda when we were meeting with Gina from BoardOnTrack. But we kind of also looked down some recommendations they had as I was thinking about maybe what we should put on the agenda.

All right. Thank you very much for that recommendation. No other thoughts? I don't think we have to take any action here, it was really just a matter of discussion.

Woman: We don't have to motion to move forward?

Lorna: Do we need a motion to...

Woman: Change the date of the board.

Lorna: ...change the date of the board meeting?

Woman: That's not a bad idea.

Lorna: Okay. Sure. Let's have an...let's go ahead and have an official motion to include our official August board meeting at that board retreat date.

Meli: Meli Pulido. I move to make a motion to have the August board meeting to be joined with the board retreat August 22nd and to be separate so that we can have a separate agenda.

Lorna: Okay. Thank you. Is there a second to that motion?

Alee: Alee Moore. I second.

Lorna: Okay. Thank you. All those in favor?

Woman: Aye.

Woman: Aye.

Woman: Aye.

Lorna: Any opposed? Okay, that motion passes. All right. At this time, we're moving to item number 5, and this is facilities. And we have requested just a quick report, if we could, or a report, however long it needs to be, from the city

regarding the status of renovations and new construction at Strong Start Academy. I'm not sure if, Tammy, is that you, or Angela? Okay. Just checking.

Angela: Thank you. Angela Rose, for the record. Just to give some brief updates on item A, right? Facility updates?

Lorna: Yes.

Angela: Okay. So, we are working with our facilities team as well as City Manager's Office and leadership to finalize all of the expansion plans for next year. As we know, we've had a couple of hiccups with some of the structural engineering that we found in the upstairs building to make the expansion plan that we originally had slated for next program year. That had to be put on hold just due to some more intensive work that has to be done on the city's end and due to NRS statutes. If it's over a certain amount of cost, we have to go out to bid. Which we didn't anticipate, we thought it would be quick and easy. Anybody who's bought a facility and thought, "Oh, it's turnkey, it's ready to go, it was already inhabited," surely, once they get in, we find more things.

So, unfortunately, that is on delay. With that news, we have the third building on the property that we're calling the library, pastor house, that was previously used for our school library for the previous owner. We are now retrofitting that to fit two additional classrooms in there to make up for the two that we would be losing upstairs. With it being a third building and close to the parking lot, we recognize the need for additional safety and security. So, we've budgeted a perimeter fence to kind of extend from the library building all the way across to join to the other buildings so that kids and teachers have a safe pathway without any access to the outside community.

I think that's the latest status as of 5:52 today. Are there any questions on the general facility improvements?

Oh, one more thing. We are still slated to work on the flooring in the building on the other side, the third building. And so that has been out to bid and awarded, we're just waiting for all the permits to come through so that the contractor can then begin construction on that. That should take roughly two to three months, they're slating for like a mid-August, late august start date once all the permitting comes through. And I hope to see an end of it by November-ish, at this point.

Again, we don't anticipate any additional needs once we get in there, we've already done some pretty extensive drilling to make sure we know what the structures look like and put it out in our bid package. And so we're not expecting too much from that. Too many surprises, I should say. But, as with anything, you never know.

But those are our main current facility projects that I'll answer any questions on before I move on?

Tammy: Angela. Tammy Malich, City of Las Vegas, for the record. I would just add that did go...we briefed on that this week, and that goes to city council. That contract award for the slab and flooring goes to city council on the 19th, next Wednesday.

Lorna: Thank you.

Angela: Angela Rose, for the record. Once that is approved, then they can then issue the permit and the work order to begin construction on that. So, any questions on the facility expansion?

Miriam: Angela, I just... Miriam Benitez, for the record. I just want to clarify. Because you said two classrooms in the pastor house. To clarify, that is to accommodate a contingency plan. As of this moment, we don't anticipate having to move any classrooms or any students into the pastor house. That would be a contingency plan.

Angela: Thank you, Miriam. And Angela Rose, for the record. To build off of that, I had a call with SPCSA this afternoon regarding the certificate of occupancy, and all of the building permits, and building and safety certifications for that building, because it wasn't currently part of our facility plan. And they were very comfortable with the recommendations that we were making, wondering if we had a contingency plan should we...something come up with the pastor house COO, the library COO. And I let them know that Miriam already had a plan to keep all students in the building, at least for the beginning of the year while we're waiting on enrollment numbers. And they were very comfortable with that. They said to keep them posted on when we receive the COO. The health district application's already been submitted and we're waiting for that application to come through in that site visit.

And so they understand the facility restraints that many charter schools face. And they are flexible as long as they know that we have a safe and secure building for students to be in, knowing that we may not be using the library/pastor house that we're calling it until later on in the school year. And at that point, it might even be a moot discussion. Because then the other building that the floor is getting reconstructed right now might be completed.

So, SPCSA is fully aware of the situation, and I made them aware, Miriam, that you had a contingency plan. And they are very comfortable with that plan, and signed off on that officially.

Colleen: Colleen McCarty, board counsel. I'm sorry, I'm a little confused. So, the renovations at the pastor house are occurring now? Okay. So, you're remodeling it with the idea that there are going to be classrooms in there? It's not the contingency?

Tammy: Tammy Malich, City of Las Vegas, for the record. We are remodeling it to allow...and permitting and COO for the ability to hold classes in the pastor's house, what is currently the pastor house. And we're going through SPCSA for that approval, as well, in the event Miriam has...pulls back other space to use for kids. SPCSA is comfortable with that, as well. We are providing enough classrooms though so that if she is fully enrolled, she has the capacity to serve kids in those classes. We can't wait until... SPCSA requires your plan A and your plan B, and both must be fully operational and functional, with hopes that you won't need both. But we will have both in place ready to go.

And the flooring in the other building is not...that building has already gone through all of the approvals, if you will. But upon the recommendation of board counsel, the school isn't using the area that could be a classroom in that building because of the flooring. But that was already approved on the front end to be used as a classroom. It will not be ready, we are expecting, until the end of August though, after the start of school.

Colleen: Okay. So, if we hit 180, we'll be using the pastor house?

Tammy: If Miriam... Miriam may need the pastor house before then, just depending on the space needs of the school. So, the classrooms that the school needs for next school year, we are negative two. The negative two we were going to gain from the upstairs splitting of classrooms. Because that is not able

to happen right now... That is still on the plan...on the path, as well. But because that can't happen by August, we are making...we're adding a net two of classrooms off the pastor's house. Now, how the school uses the space is up to the school. But all the spaces have to be certified by fire and safety, by health district, by SPCSA before they can be used. Again, we leave the operations of the building and the use of classrooms to Miriam as the Executive Director.

Colleen: Okay. And will that...will the pastor house have restroom facilities?

Tammy: It has restrooms, yeah. It has... Actually, it has a shower...

Colleen: I thought it did, but...

Angela: It has two restrooms. Angela Rose, for the record. Two restrooms.

Colleen: Okay. Thank you.

Miriam: So, just to further clarify. Miriam Benitez, for the record. We currently have an empty classroom downstairs that would accommodate one room. And upstairs, our rooms are so large that we put together our two third grade teachers, which they wanted to team teach anyway, and that room could hold up to 37 students. So, should we... The only... Put it this way, the only reason we would have to move into the pastor house is if we hit 40 third-grade students. But at 37, we could stay in the building.

So, really, we could accommodate 177 of our students, of that projected enrollment, within the building we're currently in. 180 is our goal, we hope to get there. But, of course, we had the hacking situation that has impacted our enrollment and I think it's safe to say that we will be able to stay in the main building.

Lorna: This is Lorna. I did have a question for you, Miriam. So, you're not able to use the area where the flooring is being done or the kitchen area over there, those areas. So, are students still going to be eating in the classrooms next year? Where is the kitchen supply and where do the teachers lunch? Like, how are you handling that situation?

Miriam: So, Miriam Benitez, for the record. The kitchen was temporarily moved out of that second building and they moved into our staff lounge. So, that kitchen is going to operate out of there. And then, as they stated, they are getting that pastor house ready. And so our teachers will be able to either use

that area as a staff lounge or to take their preps. Because our specialists are going to be pushing into the classrooms until the second building is complete, we're thinking sometime in January. So, they'll be pushing in. So, our teachers can use that pastor house for lunch and to take their preps, like as a teacher work room. So, the idea being that we keep students in the building. And if anyone's going to use...make use of that house, it would be the teachers, the staff.

Lorna: This is Lorna. Thank you for that update, Miriam. And I guess my only other question is are you feeling like your concerns as the educator in the building, you know, like for the operations of the buildings and stuff, like, are...is the construction team and is everybody being very responsive to your recommendations and your needs as the educator in the building?

Miriam: Yes, they have been, because my concern was that pastor house. But they've...they're going to put a gate, secure it, so no one can just walk up to the house. It's going to be gated and, again, it's going to be primarily...it's going to be occupied by staff. I don't anticipate... And that's the plan that Angela was talking about that she shared with the Charter Authority. Because we had to have something in place. We couldn't just say, "Oh, we're fine with, you know, the 30...if we get 37 kids enrolled instead of 40." No, they needed a set plan, so what's going to happen. So, we have that second building, that pastor house, ready should we need it, but I really do not anticipate needing it for children.

Lorna: This is Lorna. Thank you for that, Miriam. I just want to make sure that everything was happening in the way you need it to happen. And I know that Angela and her team have been very responsive to a lot of your concerns and needs. So, we appreciate that, too. And, of course, the partnership with the city. Any other concerns or comments regarding the construction, or the facility itself? Okay. Then why don't we go on to item B?

This is a report by the City of Las Vegas regarding the status of security improvements at Strong Start Academy. I know at our last meeting you talked about the report that was done. And I think there were some plans to do some security improvements, but we'd just like to know where we are with that.

Angela: Sure. Angela Rose, for the record. I think last time I shared some ancillary, like, buckets of work that were going to be being done. So, like, we didn't share all of the potential liabilities or areas that might be vulnerable. I

think now I can share a little bit more in detail what we have done now that those areas are no longer vulnerable. We did have a staff facilities team that were able to go into any internal or exterior gate that didn't have the mesh lining. I think there was some feedback from security that anywhere that there wasn't mesh, you may have a potential vulnerability to somebody reaching in the gate.

And so there was two areas internally, they would have to get past that initial gate to begin with. But now that they are internal, we still went ahead and put those mesh dividers in to make sure that, again, there was just no way. Even if someone got past the first barrier, they really wouldn't get past the second barrier either with that additional mesh. So, that was done.

We additionally had some feedback from our security team about some landscaping needs, just making sure that everywhere was maintained. Looking at the type of bushes that were surrounding the school, making sure we were on a consistent maintenance schedule. Now, I'm happy to report that they've done some major, like, de-brushing of areas beside the pastor house that were areas of, like, low visibility if anybody was back there. On the other...northwest side of the corner of the building, there was another area that was highly...or had low visibility from a marshal standpoint, or security standpoint, that has been removed.

There are future plans to, in general, look at the type of greenery and shrubbery that are on there. Because I think that as our arborist... We have an arborist here at the city. As he has advised, things grow and change. And as one plant style works at one time of the year. Just really looking at the whole landscaping and making sure that we have plants that look visibly pleasing, but that also aren't growing wildly and don't need regular maintenance every 15, 30 days, like some do.

The third thing that we have tackled right away is the lighting on the front part of the building. So, we noticed in our walk-through that a lot of the external pillars on that main walk on Bridger didn't have...they had light fixtures, they just didn't work. But the inside pillars had the lights. And so we had staff go look in the daytime and at nighttime. And realized that just by moving those from the outside to...I mean, from the inside to the outside, it doesn't shine that reflective light towards the building. You're able to now...if you're in the building at night, you're able to see out and nobody's able to see in, which is

what we were wanting. I think the opposite was happening, upon further review. We're not sure why it was that way it, it was school operating before then. But our facilities team right away said, "They're actually opposite of how they should be." So, they were able to go in and change all of those on the front side of the building, as well as add two additional ones." There's two pillars that didn't have them. So, they were able to do that.

Thirdly, on the lighting side, we have a traffic and...TEFO, traffic enforcement something. They are in control of all of the lighting that's not fixed to a building. So, all of the street lights, the street lamps. They were able to go in and see right away that we had old lighting, and now they've changed it to LED. So, the main light post or street light in front of the school now has an LED light. And they're looking at ways to potentially add additional street lights, should it be necessary.

They're continuously kind of monitoring it to see how the lighting looks at different parts of the day, and right now they're comfortable with the recommendations that were made as far as adding lighting to the front of the building. They're comfortable with the changing of the LED, but we do want to do some more further investigation to see if we need to add another light pole. That would require a building permit and some more structural information, but they're happy to continue down that path if they'd like to.

The bulk of the recommendations fall under larger pots of funding. And so we did supply...I mean, we did apply, City of Las Vegas, for a Department of Justice grant a couple of months back. We were able to be, like, a lead applicant because we are a funder of a charter school. And so we are still awaiting that funding award. We did get some follow-up questions, so we've supplied them with those answers. We anticipate hearing before October 1, that was kind of the date when we were told we could start spending. So, that tells me at least by October 1 we should get a notification.

In that are, again, like, large buckets of funding for just adding additional security cameras. There's already a very robust security system there. But, as with anything, we'd like to add more. Looking at any...adding any additional enhancements that already exist that are costly. Things like infrastructure to add cameras, that all costs money. The building is old. And so we had our security team walk it. They realized that what's there is good, but, if we want to get better, we have to add the infrastructure. And that's a large cost whenever

we're cutting into walls and ceilings, adding new wiring. If the wiring is old, then we have to add all new wiring building-wide, knowing it's two stories. That was their biggest cost factor, was looking at the infrastructure.

So, we feel pretty good about the grant. I think we submitted a compelling application. And there was a pretty large sum of money coming in the Department of Justice. So, we're always hopeful. We think, as a city applicant, we have a long track record of financial fidelity and being a good steward of the money. So, we're hopeful. And as soon as we hear anything, then we have a team in place ready to put out the bids, depending on the dollar amount of the project. Put out bids and start securing that work.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. Does that grant... It's only maintenance, like facilities maintenance, security? [inaudible 01:09:43]

Angela: Yes, for the record. It does...it did not allow for security personnel. There were some unallowable expenses, but facility was the main.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. I was thinking more so because Miriam was talking about there was a hacker with the security systems. So, would the systems be...like, enhancing the security of the systems at the school, would that be something that they would, you know, use on, like, facilities?

Angela: Angela Rose, for the record. We are just currently working with our, like, local law enforcement team to integrate the security system. So, again, always looking at ways to, like you said, enhance the monitoring of it. I think that the school has a, you know, pretty good security system and everything's working well right now, anything we could do to enhance it. But all of the funding requests that we put in were for structural. Almost like a one-time. Which is good because they asked about sustainability. And most of our costs didn't require a sustainability plan. Because the additional cost even for the additional cameras, I think we proposed like maybe 10 new cameras, the infrastructure to support those cameras costs a lot of money, but the monthly fee is like \$7 a camera. You know?

So, I think we were happy with the amount of funding we asked for. Knowing that if we get all of that and really put it into the building facility and all of those infrastructure pieces, the maintenance of it shouldn't be as costly as the initial build-up is.

Dachresha: Thank you.

Lorna: Other questions or comments? This is Lorna Cervantes. So, one of the things I think I'd like to do, if it's okay with you, is just bring these two items back almost as a standing item, or an every-other-month item, until...you know as we're moving through this process. Especially construction is always such a big project. And I know, working with schools in the past, that's been something where we've just kept it as a standing agenda item. So, I think that we'll probably do that moving forward just so that we're aware of how we're progressing on these projects. But thank you for your work with that, Angela.

Angela: Yeah. Angela Rose, for the record. I think that that's obviously a good idea and I think that we are in a construction plan for at least the next 12 to 18 months, 24 months. And I think, again, if we do receive...when we do receive our Department of Justice grant, that will then, again, until...well, it will be an item to bring forward as far as contractually with the board, but also a way to keep everybody apprised of what's happening, again, with limited information until we get the security pieces in place. But I'm happy to provide that monthly for you guys.

Lorna: We appreciate that, thank you. All right. With that, it looks like we're ready for item number 6 on our agenda. This is citizen participation. Any public comment during this portion of the agenda must be limited to matters within the jurisdiction of the board. So, is there any public comment tonight that was sent in? No? And I don't see anybody here in the room for public comment either.

So, given that, I just appreciate everybody participating with us tonight. And thank you, Miriam, for taking time out of your vacation, we appreciate that, too, and all the work you've done this past year to get us where we are as a school. And with that, we will go ahead and adjourn our meeting at 6:13 p.m. Thank you, everyone. Have a good day.

Woman: Bye, guys. Thank you.

Lorna: Bye-bye.