

CLV Strong Start Academy Elementary Schools, Inc. Board Meeting – August 22nd, 2023

Lorna: Good morning. The meeting of Strong Start Academy Elementary School at Tony Hsieh Education Center will come to order at this time. It is 9:10 in the morning, and I wanna thank everybody for attending the meeting in person today. It's so nice to see everyone's faces and see everybody back together in the room today. At this time, we'll call attendance. This is Lorna James-Cervantes. Jaime Gonzalez.

Jaime: Present.

Lorna: Meli Pulido.

Meli: Present.

Lorna: Heather Nay.

Heather: Present.

Lorna: Alain Bengochea. Not present. Nicole Thompson.

Nicole: Present.

Lorna: Dachresha Harris.

Dachresha: Present.

Lorna: Alee Moore.

Alee: Present.

Lorna: All right. We have quorum for the meeting this morning, and we'll go ahead and get started. At this time, I would like to introduce we have a couple of others in the room. So, would you like to introduce yourself?

Astrid: Astrid.

Lorna: I know it was an A and, in my mind, I was saying, okay. Astrid, would you like to just introduce yourself?

Astrid: Sure. My name is Astrid Angulo, and I'm wanting to join the school board to replace Heather Nay.

Lorna: Thank you very much. So, Heather has let us know that her plate's become a little overly filled, and so she is going to be stepping down from the board after this meeting. But Astrid has been working with Mayor Goodman, excuse me, on an appointment to that seat. And so, we're waiting for it to go before the City Council in September. Once that's approved by City Council, then she'll officially, you know, [inaudible 00:01:54] that seat. So, welcome to the board...

Astrid: Thank you so much.

Lorna: ...and we appreciate having you here today.

Astrid: Thank you.

Lorna: All right. At this time, we will open the floor to public comment. Was there any public comment emailed or sent in?

Miriam: There was not.

Lorna: Okay. And I don't see anybody in the room wishing to give public comment at this time, so we will go ahead and go on to 1D, approval of the minutes. Did everyone have an opportunity to look over the minutes from our last meeting? And if so, and if there are no corrections, I'd appreciate it if we could have a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Miriam: I just have a question. I know I arrived late that day and it says on the roll call that I wasn't present at time of roll call, but I do notice on page five, you've made a comment that I have joined the meeting. So that's, we don't need to add anything to the first page?

Lorna: I don't think so.

Miriam: Okay.

Lorna: Unless somebody else has anything that they think needs to be changed? I think it just is saying it in the order of the meeting, but that's... This is Lorna for the record. The reason that I mentioned that you had joined us in the room was to make sure that...

Miriam: You got [inaudible 00:03:10].

Lorna: ...your attendance was noted. Yes.

Miriam: Yes. I got it. Thank you, Lorna.

Lorna: Sure. Anybody else?

Jaime: This is Jaime Gonzales for the record. I move that we accept the meeting minutes for the meeting from July 13th, 2023.

Lorna: Is there a second to that motion?

Nicole: Nicole Thompson. I second that motion.

Lorna: Thank you. All those in favor?

Together: Aye.

Lorna: Any opposed? All right. So those meeting minutes are approved in the meeting, and we'll go ahead and move on now at this time to the finance report. We have a report here from Kristin Deitz. Was she joining us today?

Miriam: She just emailed me.

Lorna: Okay.

Miriam: She's not seeing the link, but it's in the email invitation.

Lorna: Are we on it?

Miriam: I think she's on it.

Lorna: Okay. Well, while we're waiting for Heather to be able to... Sorry. For Kristen to be able to get on, why don't we go ahead and if it's okay with everyone, we'll go to item number three while we're doing that and just let us know if she gets on.

Miriam: Yes, ma'am.

Lorna: Excuse me, everyone. I've had a cough for, like, 11 days, so please just know that I should not have any problems with, you know, being... All right. So, we'll go onto item number three. This is the report by the executive director on the status of ongoing marketing efforts, enrollment efforts, and recruiting. So, Miriam, would you like to go ahead, and we can just skip over to that report in our...?

Miriam: So let's see the handout. Okay. So we had a few tabling events in August and late July in preparation for back to school. And we continued with the OTT Advertising and Digital Campaign. And currently, when I submitted this, we were at 139, but currently we're at 141, and so, these numbers are adjusted a little bit. Third grade is up to 23 students, second grade is still at 19, first grade is at 46, and kindergarten, I believe now is at either 52 or 53. So last year during this time, I remember in August/September we started at 67 students, and we went up to 80-ish in a month. So we're hoping and expecting that we continue to enroll within this month, but we're strong at 140.

Lorna: Thank you, Miriam, this is Lorna. Would you please just remind us of what our goal was for enrollment? It was 140 for this year, wasn't it?

Miriam: No, it was actually 180.

Lorna: 180.

Miriam: Yeah. And so, remember we had the little setback in the summer that our website got hacked, and that kind of threw off our efforts, but then we got back on course. And from talking to other charter schools and meeting that I attend with the charter consortium, Opportunity 180, it appears that while we did very well in growing our numbers, all charter schools are struggling a little bit to meet their projected goal.

Lorna: Thank you. Any other questions for Miriam at this time? Miriam, we're continuing our efforts, our recruitment efforts, correct?

Miriam: Yes, we are.

Lorna: Okay, thank you. Are you focusing specifically on getting second graders in?

Miriam: Well, no, actually second grade, if you remember, that's only one class at 20...

Lorna: Correct.

Miriam: ...so we're only one student short. But third grade... And actually, we've had quite a few withdrawals already. And believe it or not, everyone that has withdrawn it appears that we were kind of second choice and then space opened up, like, at a magnet school or a different charter school where they were on hold. And as much as we try to talk them into staying, we've had, I

think we're up to four or five withdrawals that they've gone to their top school, and we were second place.

Lorna: Okay. Thank you.

Meli: This is Meli Pulido. Do you have any idea or have identified any of the main barriers for achieving the goal?

Miriam: So far we've had 187 applications that were submitted, and we had an open house, and that was very well-attended, and we've had a lot of families that have come visit and they're interested, but it always seems to be, oh, it's between this school and another school, and the other school's closer to home.

Meli: Transportation.

Miriam: So a lot of it usually has to do with distance, and it's not even so much transportation because parents are well-equipped to transport themselves. It's just, it's too much, too far.

Meli: Thank you. Thank you.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record, what percentage of the students are return students? Do you have that?

Miriam: Oh, I don't know that off the top of my head. But so last year I know that 98% had registered to return, and the few that weren't returning, they were, like, moving out of state. But since then, we did have, I wanna say a handful that didn't come back, three or four. And the other thing is, on the first day of school last year, we were anticipating [inaudible 00:09:49] and only 67 showed up, and all the rest were no-shows. And this year we only had three no-shows. So we were a lot better informed, and we had been following up, so we had a good idea of who we could count on showing up and who not. But I can get you that number. I don't know it off the top of my head.

Jaime: Jaime Gonzalez, for the record, maybe just a follow-up and build on that question or another way of asking it. So that's great, we were at 67 a year ago and we're at 141 now, right? So there was obviously throughout the school year, students that were added. How many students were added from the end of the last school year to the beginning of this school year. So from...

Miriam: You mean new students?

Jaime: New students, yes, yes. New students from May to...

Miriam: Yeah, we ended the year with about 82 students.

Jaime: Ended the year with 82?

Miriam: Yeah.

Jaime: So we added 60.

Miriam: Yes.

Jaime: Okay. Okay, great. And again, Jaime Gonzalez, for the record. Based on, again, one year's worth of data, you saw from last year, August to about September, you were still getting [crosstalk 00:11:06.411]?

Miriam: Yes.

Jaime: So we're at about 80% of our goal, and there's a possibility...

Miriam: Yes.

Jaime: ...we'll get closer?

Miriam: So, Miriam Benitez for the record. I forget his...Graphicka. Edgar. When Edgar and I met, we had looked at our numbers and we saw that we still had a lot of students enrolling last August/September, so we made sure to continue all of our advertisement and our campaign through the month of August and into September, so we could still be attracting, recruiting more students.

Jaime: Great. Thank you.

Lorna: Thank you, Miriam. Any other questions or comments for Miriam at this time?

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. Also, next month, can you provide what the breakdown of the demographics are?

Miriam: Yes.

Lorna: All right. Thank you for that. Let's go ahead then. And I see that Kristin was able to join us. Well, why don't we go ahead and just finish Miriam's

updates at this time. She has one other update for us on transportation. And she added that to...

Miriam: The handout.

Lorna: ...the handouts this morning. It's in the table that we're [inaudible 00:12:33]. So Miriam, why don't you go ahead with that.

Miriam: So, I wanted to share some information because as all of you are aware, funds were provided to help charter schools with transportation, and this is the per-pupil funding in Clark County is \$481 per student. So if we were to apply for these funds, they would initially fund us at 116 students because when the Charter Authority came in and did an audit for us, this is how many students we had. So they said initially they would fund us at 116, and then in October if there was funds available, they would go ahead and fund us at where we actually are, so at about 140.

So I contacted a bus service provider, and they charge \$67,000 per bus. And then their recommendation is because we have young kids, that we also buy a safety escort. So for one bus, essentially, that would cost us \$78,500. And times 2, it would be at \$157,000. And for 140 students, once they adjust that, we would be looking at getting 67,340 from the state to help with transportation. So I wanted to make sure to bring that information to you all for a discussion. My concern is that it only funds part of it. And I know that there's been talks with CCSD about a pay increase for teachers, and I believe they're negotiating at 10% this year and an 8% for next year, which would have to leave us kind of prepared to deal with that because that raise would essentially put our teachers at the same pay as CCSD teachers. And remember the teachers we have, they took a leave of absence and so they walked away from possibly hundreds of hours or days of sick leave, personal leave, all that. And so, in order to stay competitive, we'd have to be ready to look at pay increases again. And so, I'm just not sure if this is feasible for us. It's all very brand new. I know they have \$7 million available. And according to Rebecca Faiden [SP], she said that so far, I believe, they've only granted a million of those dollars. And perhaps it's because it's not completely funded for all schools. And when we reached out to her to see if there's any way that that would increase the amount that they're allocating for each school, she said that they're sticking with the current policy or the per-pupil funding formula that they have.

Lorna: Thank you, Miriam. Are there questions or comments for Miriam at this time?

Heather: Heather Nay for the record. I just have a question with the transportation. How would that work? Would there be, like, a set stop for the kids to be dropped off at?

Miriam: Yeah. So we would send the provider all of our addresses and they would recommend stops depending on where the addresses are. We divide it up in obviously two buses because we would need two buses. And the more stops, the longer the bus would take, so we would wanna try to minimize that so that kids aren't on the bus for, like, an hour. But that's how it would work.

Heather: Okay. Thank you.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris for the record. I was gonna ask but I think you answered my question. What was the recommendation? Was the recommendation two buses, potentially two buses?

Miriam: Yeah.

Dachresha: Okay.

Miriam: Yes.

Dachresha: And I guess I have questions too about the bus service, because the kids are so young and the escort on the bus, like what type of bus service is this or what type of background checks? Like, to commit something like that, I think will require a little bit more background for me to feel comfortable, even being okay.

Miriam: Yeah. I think they're recommending in the district what they call this person is a bus aide. And you know, those big yellow buses, they don't have seat belts, so kids tend to stand up, turn around, get out of their seat. So their recommendation is that there's some kind of bus aide on the bus so that they can manage that while the bus driver is driving.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris for the record. So, are they hired through CCSD? Is the bus service like a subsidiary?

Miriam: No. So this actual bus service, the gentleman was a principal at a charter school, and then he heard of, you know, that there was gonna be this

opportunity. So he actually left the charter school, and he started his bus company.

Lorna: This is Lorna. Along the same lines as Dachresha, I think one of the things that you and I have discussed in the past, like last year when we looked into transportation also was the liability and the increased insurance we'd have to pay. So this service does not include that increased liability insurance that we would need as a school, correct?

Miriam: I don't know. Would we need that? If we're outsourcing it, would we need that insurance?

Lorna: Yeah. Yeah, you know, we'd have to look at it. I mean, of course they would have insurance, the company would have insurance, but they're transporting our kids and so, our insurance carrier would probably require additional insurance [inaudible 00:19:15].

And I think that the place that I would be heading in my train of thought would be that we're probably better off, even though there is some money available for this, it seems like it's not enough money. And also, I don't feel very secure in hiring outside people who, you know, we just have those concerns of safety for our students with as well. So, is your recommendation that we would do this, or it sounded to me like your recommendation to us was maybe we don't take these dollars and we don't include transportation. Is that correct?

Miriam: Miriam Benitez for the record. My recommendation at this time is it's all very new and there's a lot involved, and for all those reasons to hold off and maybe we revisit it next year. And maybe next year they'll fund more so that schools aren't having to come out of pocket. And then maybe next year it'll be a possibility.

Lorna: Okay. Thank you for that recommendation. Nicole.

Nicole: Nicole Thompson for the record. I had a question regarding the amount allotted for per-pupil funding. Is this 116, is that based on a need? Was there a survey that was initiated to see who required or who was in need of transportation or...?

Miriam: No. So that 116 is we had an exceptional growth. And so, when they audited us, just to make sure, because we went from 82 students to 116 by the summertime, that's the number that the Charter Authority had us at, 116 at that

time. But now we're at 141, so we've grown even more. So that's just our enrollment that they're basing it on.

Nicole: Okay. So, Nicole Thompson, for the record, again. My only concern is that I'm just thinking about reflecting on my experience at working at the school that I work at. We are a comprehensive school and our students come from across the valley. And basically, it was just assumed that our students was because they're coming from various parts across the valley, they were in need of transportation. So, we did one year provide, you know, our CCSD bus transportation for our students, and we found that, you know, students were not taking advantage of those opportunities to ride on those buses. And so, we might've had about maybe seven buses coming from different areas and each bus probably had 10 or less kids. You know, students on those ones, they preferred their own means of transportation. Some of 'em lived in the surrounding areas. Some of 'em have parents to drop 'em off, and others just rode the city busses. So that may be something also if you're going to look into this for next year, just probably survey the need to see if we even have to consider to put in extra funding for this and finance this opportunity for students to get to school.

Lorna: Good recommendation, Nicole. Thank you. This is Lorna. Any other recommendations or thoughts? Are we comfortable then as a board just recommending that Miriam follow through with her belief that she should hold until next year? Is that a vote that we'd like to call at this time?

Colleen: Colleen McCarney, Board Council. We cannot vote on that since it wasn't agendaized for that.

Lorna: I apologize. I do see it's discussion only. So based on that discussion, I think you know where to go.

Colleen: But if you all wanna bring it back to the next meeting, we can talk about it some more.

Lorna: Do you feel a need to bring it back to the meeting or do we feel comfortable with the discussion to wait until next year?

Alee: I wouldn't feel comfortable until I... I'm with Nicole.

Man: Just give your name.

Alee: Alee Moore for the record. I'm with Nicole. I think we need to figure out what the need is first before we try to solve something that may not need to be solved.

Lorna: Good. All right. Thank you for that recommendation. All right. Thank you, Miriam. We appreciate it. I think Miriam just wanted to make sure that she didn't make a decision without bringing it to our attention and informing us as to the situation.

All right. At this time, Kristin, thank you for waiting on us. We appreciate it. We know there was a little login trouble at first, so we will move back to item number two. This is our report by Kristin Dietz from EdTec on our budget and financial reports.

Kristin: Great. Thank you so much. Kristin Dietz for the record. I apologize for being a little late today, but I'm happy that I'm able to join you. And I'm opening up the file. Here we go.

Okay. So this month's presentation, we're focusing on the fiscal year end, '22-'23. So at this time of year, all of our energy is going towards closing the books and getting everything ready for a clean audit. So, we just wanted to share with you where we have landed at this point. This is still in draft form, unaudited, and there will likely be a couple of smaller changes to this report, but just wanted to share with you all where we ended. So for the fiscal year '22-'23, we're looking at a net income of 647,486. This is quite a bit stronger than what we originally budgeted. So the left-hand column is our approved budget, the revised approved budget, and the middle column is our current ending numbers for the year. And then we have the variance on the right-hand side.

The biggest changes that are causing the large increase had to do partly with the amount of grant funding that the school got. We had budgeted less than actually came in, and in June the school received an additional 350,000 from the city of Las Vegas that was not budgeted. So that was very helpful in pushing the results for the end of the year. And in addition to that, another big change was the CSP grant. So that's our federal grant. We did have a number of expenses in this budget that didn't end up happening yet, so it's really just a timing issue. But we had a reduction in federal grant revenue in our actuals compared to the budget, and we also had a reduction in expenses primarily in the professional

development services and supplies categories. So those pretty much are a wash. We have the revenue being reduced as well as the expenses.

We also had a couple of higher paid staff leave at the middle of the year, and the cost of the salaries and the benefits was significantly reduced due to those changes, so that was a reason for our reduced ending compensation costs. And so, I wanted to show you just overall we're looking at ending the year with a net fund balance of 1.4, almost 1.5 million, which is extremely strong. It's a very, very healthy financial statement going into this current year. I did include a couple of other slides that basically show you visually what I just said in a couple different ways. So we had the savings and the professional development costs, the additional CLV grant, we had reduced supplies, reduced compensation. We also had reduced utilities, so our overall utility costs of the building came in lower than what we budgeted. And because this was our first year in operation, a lot of the numbers in the budget were estimates based on, you know, best guesses based on similar schools, similar sizes, but overall, for the year, we did come in lower than what we had budgeted there. And then the CSP grant, we had almost 400,000 of CSP expenses that did not happen, that will carry over into this current fiscal year. So those are all being rolled over.

This next slide also tells kind of the same story in just another way. Just wanna make sure that you have a really good understanding of, like, what the changes were.

In terms of the balance sheet, we ended with 1.4 million in cash, which was very strong. We had about 136,000 in accounts receivable, and that is revenues that were related to last fiscal year that had not been received as of June 30th. Most of these have since been received, but these are items that were earned but not yet received. We also had some other smaller assets included here that were carried over from last year. And we had some accounts payable for expenses that had been incurred but not yet paid as of June 30th, and so we ended with just under 1.5 million in net assets.

This is our cash for the year. So you can see we continue to increase our cash reserve, which made it possible to make purchases when needed. And I was just so happy to see the outcome of your cash balances. I work with so many schools where cash is such a struggle and so much energy and time goes into just making sure there are enough cash resources to do what needs to be done. So, this is just such a breath of fresh air and it's really helped the school to have

the resources that they need to make purchases when they need them. So we're looking at an ending cash balance, which equates to 202 days cash on hand. That's very strong. The typical days cash on hand that the authorizer expects is at least 30 days cash on hand, and they like to see 60 or more, so you guys are in really good shape here in terms of that metric.

And then in terms of our grants, the school did a really good job of spending down these federal and state restricted grants. There are some amounts that are carrying over into this year. The federal grants, the school has until September 30th to spend those monies, and there is a plan to do so, which is great. And then these other funds have longer timeframes, and the plan to spend will be during the fiscal year '24 timeframe. But I just wanted to mention, this year being the first year that the school was in existence, and the first year that the authorizer used their new grant system, it was really bumpy, and it was really difficult for the schools to have a clear understanding of what was available to spend, and there were a lot of delays in getting the money. So with all of that combined, I'm just really happy to see how well the school did with spending in line with the approved budgeted expenses. And this included amendments where there were large delays in finding out whether we were approved from the amendments. So it was just overall really, I'm happy with the results. And Miriam did an incredible job of deciding and figuring out best ways to spend these funds and staying on track with the spending plans.

Then the CSP grant is our largest grant at \$750,000. And here we just wanted to provide a snapshot of how much remains as of June 30th. So this 379,000 will carry over into fiscal year '24. And right now, at this point, we have just over 51% of the grant remaining. And beyond, this is the detailed budget versus actual report for the year. And then at the very back we have the check register for the month of June. So I'm happy to answer any questions if anyone has.

Lorna: This is Lorna. Are there any questions at this time from any of the board members? I would just like to say, Kristin, thank you for the work you've done throughout this past year with Miriam. It's been very helpful to her, I think, to have you and your guidance in this work this year. So I thank you for that. And I also wanna just note for the rest of the group that our audit process is beginning. We have to have a yearly audit. The audit results report will be brought back to the board by or before the end of October because I think it's due in November, so Kristin will be working on the backend as well with our auditors to make sure that everything is good. And I expect to have a very good

audit report coming. Any other questions for Kristin at this time? All right. Well, thank you, everybody. And Kristin, thank you so much for your report at this time. And we can move now to item 2B, which is discussion for possible action to approve the retention of a dual language consultant. And is that you, Miriam, or is that...?

Miriam: Yes.

Lorna: Okay.

Miriam: So, in your packet, you have a handout from Dual Language Education of New Mexico and a separate one from TNTP. And so, we'll start with the Dual Language one. So this is a quote for 22,000, and this is basically just a site visit. They'll come out for two days and observe, and interview folks, and then give us feedback on their assessment of our program, and kind of let us know where the strengths are, where the weaknesses are. And that's what that encompasses. TNTP, their proposal includes... Where is it? It includes four-week cycles and there's six cycles altogether where our assigned TNTP coach would come out, they provide PD, and then they go in and observe, and they coach, and work specifically with teachers, work with admin. And that cost came in at 109,000 starting in October and going all the way to the end of the year.

So I was trying to get, when I reached out to Dual Language Education of New Mexico, what I was wanting was kind of those learning cycles where they come in, they work with the teachers, they observe, they give us feedback, but evidently, they don't do those learning cycles, so this is the quote that I got for that two-day kind of assessment of our program. And then this learning cycle one, that it's to help improve instruction in both English and Spanish, and work on family engagement, strengthening our family engagement component at the school.

Lorna: Thank you. Any questions or comments for Miriam?

Jaime: Jaime Gonzalez, for the record. So for the Dual Language one, it's a two-day come in, assess, give you feedback. Based on their recommendations, that feedback, do they then propose coming back in and doing a, you know, two-month later assessment? Because it seems like what you were looking for is more the TNTP, which is more of a process as opposed to here's a one-shot diagnosis.

Miriam: Miriam Benitez for the record. I did ask, and they have kind of a menu of they call it retreats. So they would come in and do that assessment, and then based on that assessment, if we could benefit from any of their retreats, then we could kind of sign up for that and ask them to come back and reassess later in the year. Oh, but as it stands, the other thing I forgot to mention is their first availability would be in January. So that's when they could come out and do this two-day assessment.

When the city of Las Vegas initially wrote the grant, that CSP grant, they had put in there, TNTP, they had written it in there. So last year we did a lot of work with TNTP, and I found that it was really strong, and I do attribute a lot of the teacher growth that our teachers made specifically in reading instruction, the whole science of reading. We did a lot of that work last year and writing. And so, this year it would be continued, but also with an emphasis in Spanish. So we wouldn't just be looking at improving literacy in English, we're looking at that Spanish component as well.

Lorna: Thank you. This is Lorna. I know that all the research I've read and also all the practical experience I've had has shown that the best way to improve instruction in the classroom is through ongoing coaching instruction and feedback. So having those ongoing cycles, I think would be very effective. I think that's why we've seen some of the growth we have at this school. And personally, I would recommend that we look at the TNTP because it's a more comprehensive approach to the work being done. Miriam's not having to wait. It looks like the first availability was in October to start the work with the school, which would be a very appropriate time to start this process. And so, I would recommend that we go with that offer if that's what the board's decision is. And because of the amount of the purchase, this is one of those items that per our protocol, has to come for board approval.

Miriam: And the other thing I wanted to mention as Kristin was going through the finances, the CSP grant, we have till June, I believe, of 2024 to spend down. And I think we still have, I wanna say like 119,000 or so in the line item for professional development. So this was all worked in ahead of time, it was planned for. So this would be... This work with TNTP would fall under that category.

Lorna: Nicole, it looked like you wanted to comment.

Nicole: Yeah, I was gonna agree along... Nicole Thompson for the record. I was gonna agree along the same lines that this comprehensive approach that TNTP is offering sounds more of a guarantee that they understand what we already need already to improve literacy. And that is the professional development, the mentoring, the feedback, those sorts of things. But I like the part on the family engagement as well. It's not gonna come out and tell you what we think that you need, as opposed to, we're gonna come out and do and give you what exactly you need based on, you know, current trends across the nation, possibly, you know, across other districts, those sorts of things. So it seems like more of a guarantee from TNTP that you're gonna get your money's worth as opposed to this one. And then the time constraints also is extremely important. Instead of coming out, you know, midyear, maybe to start this development from the very beginning, or the outset of the academic school year.

Meli: Meli Pulido. Just doing the quick math for the TNTP, it's about 27,000 per week to equal the 109,000 on there. And for 22,000 with the New Mexico model, we are only getting 2 days to put in writing what they assess to be in need of addressing. And then it becomes an à la carte. And to me, to truly gain the engagement of the teachers and the parents, we are not gonna see much growth with the stop and go à la carte models. I really like the TNTP model, and we're probably gonna end up with the à la carte menu exceeding the 109,000 you know, when we think about it. And the fluency of four continuous weeks with a model that's already proven to work at other schools is, I feel the best interest of the children.

Lorna: Unless there's more discussion we could...

Jaime: I would say...

Lorna: Oh, go ahead, Jaime.

Jaime: I'm sorry. Jaime Gonzalez, for the record. I'm just reflecting on something that Miriam said. So with this 109,000, I think it was, does that represent...does that leave much else from a budget standpoint? And maybe Kristin can chime in here too. Does this leave much else in the budget for professional development or is this pretty much what the teachers would get for the year?

Kristin: Kristin Dietz for the record. I believe there's about 190,000 in the CSP budget remaining for professional development. So that grant alone leaves

room. And then we also have some other federal grants that can be used for professional development items.

Lorna: Yeah.

Jaime: Thank you, Kristin.

Lorna: This is Lorna. I believe Title II is an all-professional development grant as well. So that money that's sitting in the Title II grant is all professional development as well. So given if we need more discussion, fine, but otherwise, I would move that we approve for Miriam to go forward with the purchase of professional services from TNTP as stated in the quote that she presented to us today. Is there a second to that motion?

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris [inaudible 00:43:11].

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

Together: Aye.

Lorna: Any opposed? Okay, we can go ahead with that. All right. Thank you, everybody. We'll go on to item number four at this time. This is a discussion for possible action to approve the Strong Start Academy Parent Handbook, Employee Handbook, Test Security Plan, and English Learner Policy and Plan. For everybody's information, these are plans that have to be submitted on a yearly basis. I will let Miriam have the floor in just a second. But I will say that she has pointed out that the majority of changes to these plans have been dates, personnel, any small updates, things like that, that needed to be made just to bring the plans current. Miriam, is there anything else you would add to that?

Miriam: So, for instance, our parent and student handbook, last year it was K2, this year K3. So little simple things like that changed. Our dress code and uniform policy changed a little bit because last year we had shirts and this year we wanted to go with a more cost effective...and we bought patches. And that way, the families, we were able to sell the patches to the family for 68 cents and they can iron 'em onto the shirts they buy. It's a lot more cost effective. So just simple things like that.

In the employee handbook mainly what changed was, like, procedures, lunch procedures. Because when we had to submit this last year, it was well before the school opened, and I realized when I was revisiting it this summer, there

was all kinds of talk about lunch procedures in the cafeteria. Well, we don't have an open cafeteria, so I had to redo all of that, specifying students eating lunch in the classrooms. So it was those kinds of things that were changed in that handbook.

And then this English Learner Policy and Plan, this is the one that was tabled from our last meeting that we received the template from the Charter Authority. And I had forwarded to Colleen, so Colleen had looked it over. And we were just supposed to input themes specific to the school in certain parts of that policy and plan. And then finally the Strong Start Test Security Plan which we had in place since last year. But this year as I was looking over the plan, I did notice it said, "Board approved," so here it is.

Lorna: Okay. Well, thank you. Are there any concerns or questions about any of these plans, or are we able to have a motion [inaudible 00:46:13] forward to approve these plans as presented?

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris for the record. I move that we approve the Strong Start Academy Elementary School Parent Student Handbook and Employee Handbook, the Test Security Plan, and the English Learner Policy and Plan.

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

Nicole: Nicole Thompson. I second that motion.

Lorna: All right. All those in favor?

Together: Aye.

Lorna: Any opposed? All right. That motion passes. Thank you. And next is a discussion for possible action to approve the Organizational Performance Framework Self-Certification program.

Miriam: So this form I believe it's the board is certifying for all these things to be true. So, if you guys want to go down the list. Indicator One, Education Program. The school conducted initial evaluations in the 45-day timeline to determine if students had a disability and were eligible for special education services. Yes.

The school only uses staff who hold Nevada licensure in special education to provide special education services. Yes.

Evaluations and current signed IEP are on file for all special education students when available. Yes.

The school ensured that all students with disabilities and all students receiving instruction in a class funded with gifted and talented, funds were served at the required student-teacher ratios. We didn't have that program last year because gifted and talented starts at third grade, but I put yes because no would mean we're out of compliance.

The school took proper steps to identify all students in need of ELL services as required by law, evidenced by the presence of completed home language survey, which is included in our registration, online registration and screening tests for pupils identified as having a primary home language other than English. Yes, we did that.

Staff the school uses to provide services to ELL, hold as required by law, Nevada licenses with English language acquisition and development endorsements. Yes.

And of course, last year just for the record, so that you all know, we did have multiple audits, including the special ed department came out and they check for all this stuff. So does the Title III for our ELL students. So we have so many audits. So it is on record that all of this was looked for and they found evidence that we were in compliance. The governing board certifies that it is submitting all required reports in the NDE chart of accounts. And so, that one's interesting because I think that one has more. It says the governing board, but that chart of accounts is what Kristin deals with in all of her finances. So, I don't know why it says the governing board certifies, but that's what she does. So, yes.

The Attorney General did not issue findings of fact and conclusions of law that the governing body or any other public body created by the charter school has taken action in violation of any provision during the fiscal year. So, that is true. We did not have any issues.

The school received no material governance compliance complaints, which were substantiated, or if they were substantiated, the school board properly implemented acceptable corrective actions. We did not receive any complaints.

The school's governing body certifies that all current board members have completed training in Nevada's Opening Meeting Law and the State Public

Charter School's governance standards. And everyone has met that requirement, right?

The school property collects and protects student private information pursuant to FERPA and any other applicable requirements. Yes.

The school's governing board certifies the school was in compliance with all due process protections, privacy, civil rights, and student liberties requirements including the First Amendment. Yes.

The school complies with requirements regarding maintenance of personnel records. Yes.

The school has no known outstanding obligations with regard to payroll, unemployment, ADA, FLMA, IRS or other federal, state, and local entities. Yes, we do not have any outstanding obligations.

The school timely obtained valid fingerprint clearance for all school employees, which have or may have regular contact with children or with student data, all employees and volunteers of the charter school and all vendor employees situated or regularly on campus. Yes.

All governing body members after being appointed, have met the 10-day law regarding fingerprint submissions. Yes.

The school complies with all their requirements, including providing appropriate nursing services and dispensing of pharmaceuticals, food service requirements, and other health and safety services. Yes.

Lorna: Okay. Do we all agree that everything that was stated in this report is accurate? And if so, then we need to vote to basically have me sign this so that we can send it in to the Charter Authority.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris for the record. Number 14, I would just write in the notes to correct FLMA to FMLA.

Miriam: I'm sorry?

Dachresha: Just because our chairlady's name is going on this, in the notes section for number 14, I would correct they have FLMA. It's FMLA. So I would just make that correction just so we're not saying that we have something that is inaccurate.

Lorna: Yeah. When Miriam read that, I thought, "What? This is wrong." Okay. That's on their forms, but I did note that. Okay. Then we need a motion to approve with that correction.

Jaime: Jaime Gonzalez, for the record. I move that we approve the Organizational Performance Framework Self-Certification form for Lorna to sign.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris for the record. I second.

Lorna: All those in favor?

Together: Aye.

Lorna: Any opposed? All right. That motion passes. Thank you everybody. And I will make sure you have this before we leave today, Miriam.

Miriam: Okay. Thank you.

Lorna: Now we're on item number five. This is a report by the city of Las Vegas regarding the status of renovations and new construction at Strong Start Academy. So is that Angela?

Angela: It is. I snuck right in. Angela Rose for the record. We are still in the middle of various stages of three different construction projects at the school. We have the brand-new construction, which is we're at the very beginning stage. We just had our first design meeting. That will be of the two-story building that will go where the current pastor house is slated to open for the 2025 school year. That is a longer project with considerably higher costs and so we are in the very beginning stages of that project.

The second project is the expansion of the second-floor classrooms to make the two sides on the second floor go from four to six classrooms. That was originally scheduled for this summer, but due to cost escalation and timing, we weren't able to get that done before school started. So had to make some renovations and some modifications there, but that is scheduled to start the day school gets out for the summer. I'm working very hard with our design team and architecture firm to make sure that all permitting, all mitigation plans are ready to go, that way we can start the minute we get out of school to get that completed.

And then our third project is the ever so popular floor of the second building, the church building. That has been a labor of love for sure, but we got official word that the bid has been awarded and construction will begin on September 11th. So that's a three-month project. Wait, September, October, November. Four-month project, but then another 30 days to do some finishing touches of I'm thinking mid-February, it'll be done. So let me take questions before I go on. Any questions on the three projects and their stages?

Lorna: Any questions, any concerns from the school's standpoint? Okay. Yep.

Angela: And that all those moving parts is what kinda got us to the place where we started school this year with the pastor house being in use. So, we again, have worked really hard with our facilities team and Miriam's team to get that pastor house ready for before and after school programming, staff development opportunities. Right now we talked about enrollment a little bit and they're not using that building for students, but there's opportunities there should we need it. And with the floor of the second building being pushed back significantly than we originally anticipated, are really glad that we did the work on the front end to get that space prepared in case we do need it. So, to my knowledge it's working out, I think well, and I'm just hoping that we can get everything else on schedule. Construction schedules are never on schedule, but we're just putting it out there that they're going to be on schedule.

Lorna: Thank you. This is Lorna. I know in our last meeting, Angela, you told us they were going to be building a fence to make it more secure for the passage between the pastor house and the back of the school. Was that completed?

Angela: Yep. Yep. The fence was completed. So we have a complete barrier between the pastor house and school and then the parking lot, which typically is where teachers park, but we do have other LVA and other people parking there during school hours with the high school across the street. So just trying to keep that barrier safe for all students.

Lorna: Thank you. Any questions at this time?

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris for the record. And we increased security last month, right, at the school? We increased security already at the school or...

Lorna: Did we increase it?

Dachresha: Yeah. Last month didn't we talk about increasing the security after there was some breaches.

Lorna: Yes. And I think that's our next report is the security improvements in the school. So I think that's where you're going, Dachresha, and if not, then we'll ask that question again at the next report. Why don't we have you go ahead with the security report then, Angela, and then if there are other questions at the end, we could take those for either A or B.

Angela: Okay. So, again, Angela Rose for the record. We are still waiting for the, on a board notification from Department of Justice on that Federal Safety Security Grant. It's the COPS School Safety Improvement Grant that we've been told October we would get notified, but we were hoping for, like, a preliminary... We haven't really had any, like, feedback from the DOJ at all, so still keeping fingers crossed for that. And so, that will be a large funding source for a lot of the infrastructure to improve the security recognitions from the Marshal's report. In that grant includes the safety film for all the windows. There's lots of those interior and exterior windows in each of the classrooms. So the safety film, enhanced security camera infrastructure. Cameras. Like, door locks. Integrating the system in with our city Marshal system. So lots of just that background infrastructure wiring to make all of the external pieces work. It's a one-time investment. And so, we submitted the grant under that guise that we didn't need a sustainability plan because a lot of that work is just a one-time cost to make sure that we have the framework to build, you know, on that as the school gets bigger.

We also included in that grant any plans for new buildings and new classrooms. So that funding will allow to meet the needs of the expansion projects I've already mentioned. So we haven't heard word on that. In the meantime, not much has changed since our last report. We have had our landscaping team regularly going out to make sure that they're keeping sight and sound availability for anybody walking by. When the Marshals patrol, they wanna be able to see any blind spots, they wanna remove hedges where there's those kind of things. They've already done all of the interior meshing to make sure that nobody can reach into any of the gates. So if they do get inside that first barrier, they're not able to get to the second barrier. We've changed some locks. We've added...Miriam's working with her team on some security camera modifications. So we've done the bulk of the, like, low-hanging fruit to make sure that it's as safe as we can without those big investment pieces. And then

Transcription by www.speechpad.com Page 23 of 24

should we hear back from DOJ that we don't get that funding, or we get a portion of it, then we would work with the team like you guys as well as Miriam's team to figure out how we can start to piece and parcel out and prioritize what kind of funding goes first.

Lorna: Okay. Thank you. Does that answer your question, Dachresha?

Dachresha: Yes.

Lorna: Okay, thank you. Any other questions or comments for Angela at this time with regard to construction or with the security improvements at Strong Start?

This is Lorna. I'll just say we appreciate the work on the part of the city to help us make sure that we have strong security at the building as well as a safe and healthy learning environment for our students. So thank you for that work and we'll continue to keep these two items on the agenda for our coming meetings so that we can just always be aware and then you can let us know if there's anything you need from us too as far as those areas go. All right. Thank you so much, Angela.

All right. At this time, we're moving to item number six. This is citizen's participation. I don't see anyone in the room from public comment, unless I am wrong, did any come in during the meeting?

Miriam: Nope.

Lorna: So at this time we can adjourn our meeting at 10:12 a.m. Thank you everybody for your participation in our board meeting. And Kristin, thank you for joining us this morning. Have a good day.

All right. We are set to start... Oh, we'll wait to stop recording. All right, everyone. Thank you for your participation in the...