

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. Let's call the meeting to order officially. And it's Wednesday, April 15th, 5:36 PM. Calling the Genesee Community Charter School Board of Trustees meeting to order. Shannon, I am going to turn it right over to you or should we turn...

Shannon Hillman:

We can turn it right over. Sorry Michelle, I muted you. We can turn it right over to the teachers.

Rebecca Mason:

Hi, so Jeremiah and I are here from fourth grade to talk a little bit about teaching during this global pandemic. So Jeremiah's in the tulip field on your screen. And I'm going to share my screen a little... It says the host disabled attendee screen sharing.

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah. Let me undisable it. Sorry, I didn't realize you were going to share your screen.

Rebecca Mason:

Sorry.

Shannon Hillman:

Nope, that's okay. There we go.

Rebecca Mason:

So bear with me for a minute because I... Okay. I want this. Nope, this... Sorry guys. View, present. All right, can you see my screen? Yes. Okay. So Jeremiah, do you... is this the first? Yes. Is that the first screen? You want to start, Jeremiah?

Jeremiah Ditch:

Sure. So in fourth grade, just to give you an idea of what we've been doing since school closed. This is some screenshots of us in our morning meeting. So normally every day we'd have morning meeting, it's about 20 minutes a day. I think our morning meetings now are once a week and they've been taking close to an hour. We have had almost the entire class there.

Rebecca Mason:

I am sorry.

Jeremiah Ditch:

It's Okay. I'd say... I think we had about 26 out of 32 students, maybe 27 on some of the days. We're also reaching out to kids once a week. Each kid either gets a phone call or an invite to essentially a zoom meeting that is a small group of maybe like a group of four or five students so that we're connecting with them more at a personal level than just the instruction that we're delivering, which we'll tell you about in a minute.

Rebecca Mason:

And the other thing is, is that on the left hand picture, the reason you don't see many screens is because we were playing an activity that day. And when they were out they had to turn their screen off, just so you know. Usually their screens are all on and you'll hear more about the little thing on the right, in a minute. The little blonde girl.

Jeremiah Ditch:

So I've been taking the lead on ELA. So I'll give you an overview of what we've been doing. The kids have been writing in a pandemic journal, which I think the next slide gives more detail on. There we go. So this was an excerpt from... I made a YouTube video and I talked up this pandemic journal, and it essentially told them; they're living through a major event in history. We'll remember this forever. But if we don't document it, we actually probably will forget things. And that they are the only 9 and 10 year olds to really ever live through something like this and that history needs their perspective.

Jeremiah Ditch:

So I've been giving them about three or four prompts per week to write in. And here's an example of some of the prompts to write in their pandemic journal. Describe something other than school that has been canceled for you. Are you excited about it being canceled? Are you sad? Are you mad? What have you been hearing about the pandemic from news or from your family? I think my direction was something about a paragraph to two paragraphs per entry. I'm trying not to go over a page because we have some kids that will write pages and pages and pages every day.

Jeremiah Ditch:

I'd say about two-thirds of the kids are actively doing it. From what I can tell, we've taken some Google surveys and it seems like about two-thirds of them are pretty engaged in doing it. We've even had some kids at Morning Meeting read an excerpt from theirs. And I think there's been more attraction, more kids getting interested in doing it.

Rebecca Mason:

I'm going to go back to there.

Jeremiah Ditch:

So that's our major writing thing that's happening right now. Epic, is an online resource. It's sort of like Netflix for books and we got every kid a subscription. It was actually free during this crisis and they can access books at their grade level. Like I said, it's kind of Netflix for books. I also decided to try to make some of the learning that we are doing authentic and timely. So we've been doing ELA lessons about digital literacy, like how to write a good email.

Jeremiah Ditch:

I'm going to do one on strong passwords and privacy issues on the internet. Because a lot of kids went from not using screens very often, especially fourth graders it's like they're all just starting to enter into the online world or if they were entering in the online world, there was a lot of parent control over that. But as they've had to navigate this digital world that we've moved into, it seemed like a really authentic time to teach them some of those skills. So my plan with ELA is to have one lesson a week be relating to technology. And then the other lesson each week will be more of standards. Like the ELA that we had planned on teaching that's based on the New York state standards.

Rebecca Mason:

So we have a YouTube channel if you're interested, it's GCCS class of 2022. And I feel like... I think Mr. Ditch and I should be really proud of this channel because we've just been uploading videos for the kids and it started right from the beginning and the kids really loved this. So some of the videos are just talking to them, doing a read aloud. Mr. Ditch has been creating videos with his son Andre, who you can see in the video.

Rebecca Mason:

I've been making videos with Susie, she's a puppet that I use in the classroom often. And we've been reading a picture book three or four times a week and we've been giving out math challenges for the kids to try. And then, Mrs. Spano, the person who was subbing for me is still actually posting some read aloud on the channel because she was reading a chapter book with the students before all this started, so she's been posting that. And it seems like it's really popular, they've enjoyed going on. It gives them a little outlet every day, it's not like it's necessarily... We do post some lessons on there, but sometimes it's just for fun.

Rebecca Mason:

So my sabbatical that I just finished actually involved writing problem-based tasks for math, which I am not able to use yet. I'm looking forward to using them next year. And I also took a college class at Nazareth that was just really, I'm still taking it actually, but it was all about mathematical thinking and different kinds of like... We did a lot of logic problems. We did things with geometry, we did graphing things, that were all just challenging problems. And I've taken a lot of those problems and adapted them for fourth graders. So those are the challenge problems that I've been giving.

Rebecca Mason:

I've given the kids a lot of logic problems and I've given them some like, "how many squares are in this picture?" I wrote down some of their responses. "Could we do more problems like this? I really liked them. I really liked these problems. Thank you so much for them." lots of exclamation points. I think that it's interesting that even though these math challenges have been optional for everybody, that between 18 to 23 students have turned all five in so far, which is exciting.

Rebecca Mason:

As far as the rest of math, are all of GCCS. We've moved into using Zearn, It's an online platform. And I just took a little blurb off the Zearn's website and put it there. But what I've found so far, I'm still playing around with it is, I was able to start all of the kids in the module that we were starting with fractions and it leads them through each lesson of the module. It's a lot of; they have to put lines in for their tape diagrams and put numbers where in the fraction where it goes. And if they get it wrong, a teacher comes on and explains to them.

Rebecca Mason:

We haven't heard much feedback yet about it. I don't know, maybe Shannon can answer more of that if questions come up of feedback from other classes. Our kids have only been doing it two days. My own son is doing it for the fifth grade class and I think it... To me it seems good. Expedition, we're teaching the American revolution and of course our kids were really devastated that they couldn't go to Boston. This expedition is a lot of hands on, we do a lot of simulations with the kids and of course the Boston field study is really all of our content. So it was really hard to lose that.

Rebecca Mason:

We decided that since fifth grade is teaching the same content as us, that we kind of are working with them every week. We've narrowed the content down to 16 lessons and we divided it among the fourth and fifth grade. So every week the classes will get one lesson from a fourth grade teacher and one from a fifth grade teacher. They're prerecorded so that they can access them at any time. And even though we're missing the hands on activities, the field studies, the class discussions that can make these things really powerful, we're trying to do it in exciting ways. So just today I was working on the proclamation of 1763 and I have a simulation that happens through this Google slides, so it's not real, but it's some way that they can see this happened, what we would have done in the class. You want to go Jeremiah?

Jeremiah Ditch:

So just to give you a sense of how our kids are engaging in the last four or five weeks since school was closed. We have sent out a weekly exit ticket. It's basically like a Google survey that asks them maybe a half a dozen questions to just ask them what they did during the week and to rate different things of: how much math they did or how much they read or something like that. And we've been getting about 25 out of 32 students turning in those exit tickets, indicating that they've been keeping up with at least the major things that were putting out there.

Jeremiah Ditch:

The other seven students, it's a combination between they're doing some of the work, but they're forgetting the exit ticket or they're not doing a lot of the work and not doing the exit ticket. We do have, I'd say a pulse on every single student in our class. There was one student that we felt like maybe we weren't going to hear from, but actually just today her mom reached out to all three classroom teachers and separately about different questions, and it seems like they're going to get up and running soon, which was really good news for us.

Jeremiah Ditch:

And similar like in morning meeting, like we said, maybe four or five kids aren't making it each week. And yeah, you wrote that on there that we just got a hold of the parent today. So I think by the end of today we will have 32 students on Google classroom, which is our online... It's our virtual classroom basically.

Rebecca Mason:

So we basically just have three students that are really getting marked absent for most of each week. Here and there they've showed up for a morning meeting, but they've not done exit tickets, they've not submitted work. One of them is the student Jeremiah was talking about, so we're hoping that will change. We've reached out to families, we've talked to the students. One of the students works with Erica Dooley our English as a Second Language person, and she's actually driven a Chromebook over to that student's house. So we're trying but...

Jeremiah Ditch:

Yeah.

Rebecca Mason:

So I think that was it. I'm going to stop my screen share and if anyone has any questions.

Shannon Hillman:

Mark has a question.

Mark Schiesser:

So I guess one question... I have kind of threefold question. The first one is, how much content are the students getting? That's like sort of vital content. Would you say that it's 40% 60% 80% 90% of what they might... and I know that it's not 90% of what they'd be getting in the classroom, but that's a question. And then the other piece to the question is, so you have four or five students that for the past four weeks have really been disengaged. And it sounds like you're doing all kinds of things to help them become engaged, but it seems like that's really hard to overcome.

Mark Schiesser:

And I'm just wondering if there are any... I'm just wondering about it, I guess. I'm not making you guys responsible for that because I know it's super difficult, but just be curious as to what your thoughts are both on the percentage of how much content are they getting in this method of schooling. And then of the students that are really somewhat unengaged, how do you go back and get them engaged?

Jeremiah Ditch:

So for the content for expedition, we figured that there are eight weeks and we're doing two lessons a week. So we actually have already decided which 16 lessons we're doing about to teach the American revolution, and we'll get to all of it. I think it's more that the depth gets, I mean, you're not going to Boston and you're not really doing a lot of the best ways to learn. So you're getting more of an overview of it. But I think we are going to get to most of-

Rebecca Mason:

Yeah, I think so.

Jeremiah Ditch:

... The content just sort of quicker and not as deep.

Rebecca Mason:

So it was also kind of exciting because when we taught this expedition before, we always run out of time and we can't go deep with the constitution. And it felt like Jeremiah, you can agree with this, but when we were planning it the other day, we were able to even get in the Bill of Rights, which we've never gotten in. So I mean we're not having to deal with transitions and all that. I mean it's not the most exciting lesson, but we're getting the main topics in there.

Jeremiah Ditch:

Right. And I'd say that's similar in ELA... And most kids are indicating that they're still reading every day at home. And it's so hard to say exactly how much of this learning will stick. So it's like we might be covering 70% of the material, but what are they going to walk away with? I don't really know. But I do think that they're not losing the skills that they've had, the ones that are engaging. They are at least staying sharp with math and reading and writing and doing things that... So that it's not like a massive slide like they might have over a summer break.

Rebecca Mason:

Yeah. And I would say for math that's... I'm really worried about math actually because... Especially of all units for this to happen, it's fractions. And fourth grade with fractions is always the hardest module, and I feel like it builds the basis for fifth grade. So I am worried about next year and what will happen trying to make up some of this content.

Jeremiah Ditch:

Yeah. And fourth grade is a unique class with reading because we don't actually have that many readers below grade level. So I'm pretty comfortable with the work they're doing just knowing the demographics of my class. But I did think, if we had a class that had a third of the class reading below grade level or something, I feel like those are the kids you'd worry about the most from a prolonged school closure. And in terms of the kids that are disengaged, it's challenging because they're like.... Especially coming from school, we're all about everybody's equal and everybody comes to school on the same footing.

Jeremiah Ditch:

And it's been very hard to know that you're having a morning meeting when there's four or five kids that can't participate for various reasons. And we're reaching out to those families and doing the best we can, but I also think it's striking a balance between not over reaching out to them and actually causing them to just turn their phone off and never want to answer their phone because you're just sort of driving them crazy-

Rebecca Mason:

And Really it's three kids. The other kids like the missing from Morning Meeting, it's been different ones like maybe they've forgotten or they got up late or something. It's really those three kids and two of them showed up at our morning meeting this week, so that was exciting. And all three of them... I think it's a little overwhelming at home for all three of them. One of them, there's a language barrier with the family and I'm not sure how much support the other two get. So when we did talk to the one parent today, both of us in separate emails offered to meet with that individual individually and get her back on track. So we're hoping that the parent takes us up on that.

Shannon Hillman:

Jess, did you want to ask your question?

Jessica Nordquist:

Yeah. I didn't want to necessarily ask the question, but I just want to commend the team and all the teachers at GCCS. It has been amazing to watch you all be about six steps ahead of every other district in this County even. In providing instruction, in phasing in, meeting the needs of kids both basic needs of food, of Chromebooks, of internet, of having parents engaged, it's just phenomenal. And so I just want to say thank you to you, the teachers as well as to Shannon and everyone else who's been part of that.

Jessica Nordquist:

I think you've done an amazing job to prioritizing the social emotional needs of kids as they go through this community trauma as well as the families, as we all adjust to having to do all of this all the time together but distant. And you did it with little direction from the state. You did it because it was the right thing to do, you didn't do it because it was a mandate. And so I love that you prioritize the kids and

the families first and then went into the phase of easing into the academic standards. So I just really want to appreciate that and say thank you.

Rebecca Mason:

Thank you, Jess.

Jeremiah Ditch:

Thank you.

Shannon Hillman:

George...[inaudible 00:20:43]

George Desmarreau:

Yeah, I just had three comments. One, I think what you're doing is great. Two, part of me wonders if the very extreme nature of all this actually could have a silver lining in terms of focusing the kids' attention on what's happening and what you're presenting so that the concerns about what they're taking away might be offset a little bit by the very extreme nature of what they're going through and the work they're having to go through just to participate in the class. And the third is word of reassurance. When I studied the revolution, I lived in a suburb of Boston and I didn't even go to Boston then. And it still all worked out for me, but you're doing a great job.

Shannon Hillman:

Good. Michelle, did you want to say something?

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah, I wondered, and you sort of got to this Becky, is do you... In your class as well as others have a handle on some more of the social-emotional issues that families are facing? It certainly sounds like it based on things that Shannon has said, but I wondered if you could just comment for the board about those deeper issues that are going on. Do you feel like you guys are really getting information about what those social-emotional challenges are, economic challenges, et cetera of the kids and their families?

Rebecca Mason:

I think we know our families really well, so we know that whether or not they're being forthright about it is different because I think... Especially those three families are pretty private families. So we ask them what they need or, I don't know, it's just hard because... Like the one student did need a Chromebook and she got a Chromebook.

Rebecca Mason:

And I'm not sure about the other two Shannon, if they ended up getting Chromebooks from school or not. I think you know who we're probably talking about, I'm not sure if they did. But the families themselves of those three students haven't been terribly willing to say, "this is what we need."

Jeremiah Ditch:

Yeah. And I mean we have been making weekly phone calls and the combination between talking to the kids and the families. And pretty much everyone I've talked to is like, "yeah, we're good, we're safe, we're okay." And if there are more needs than that, I haven't heard that much from the specific families that I've talked to.

Rebecca Mason:

I did find the first week of phone calls that I felt like I was talking to the parent longer than the child. They just had a bunch of questions, but then after that it got to be where they would be like, "Oh, yeah, here's my child."

Michele Hannagan:

And Shannon, would you say that that's true for all grade levels?

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah. We're going to talk about this later. So Jeremiah and Becky, thank you for kind of giving a case study to some of the updates that I have more like globally for the school because it's absolutely on point with what's happening across kindergarten through sixth grade. We have a pulse on every student and the attendance rate you'll see is pretty high, and I'll talk about how we're taking "attendance."

Shannon Hillman:

One thing I did want to say is David Frank was very clear in one of our first webinars with charter leaders around the state, that this time that children are attending at home will never take the place of seat time in school, it just won't. So we have to have some reality around this too, that we are going to put forth plans, we're going to deliver lessons, we're going to try to hold families accountable as much as we can, but it's also equally and maybe even is more so in my mind and in all of our minds important to make sure that families are getting what they need with just those basic needs being met.

Shannon Hillman:

And some of these families that Becky and Jeremiah are alluding to are ones where the basic needs piece is a huge portion of their day. And so we are giving that grace and trying to help support them in whatever way that we can. So I'm just super proud of our school and our teachers and everything that's happened in justice, right? We are, ahead of the game, dare I say than many of the other schools in the area. Michelle Burack had a question, I think. You still have a question, Michelle?

Michelle Burack:

I had a question and just a comment as a parent. The question was whether or not the online resources like Zearn or any of these other things, are there fees associated with them or all of these resources that you guys needed, teachers, these are budgets controlled-

Shannon Hillman:

Everything right now is pretty much free. I think everything is free, which is amazing. So we've been able to sample things, which is great. And then we'll see what we might want to hold on to in the future. So that's been good.

Michelle Burack:

Yeah. And just as a parent and kind of navigating digital learning life with my two kids and different kids having different schedules of when they have meetings, and we had actually gotten into a rhythm before the school put out the greater structure and said then we had to retool. And Poppy actually was really distressed by some of the first Google Hangouts class meetings because she missed her friends so much. So I gave her some grace to not attend.

Michelle Burack:

So I think the reasons why kids don't come to a specific event or a specific meeting, they're all over the map. And it's more if there's specific students who are vulnerable, who have barriers to access, that we as a school can help them bridge. I think Shannon will talk about the discussions with the Family Association that we're trying to make sure we target the families with those significant barriers. But the individual days where something's missing, it's... Being at home, there are other life lessons going on too.

Michele Hannagan:

Indeed. So Shannon, I've unmuted myself to facilitate us moving along. Is that all right?

Shannon Hillman:

Yep.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. Any other questions for Becky or Jeremiah? Thank you both. That was great.

Jeremiah Ditch:

Thank you.

Michele Hannagan:

All right, stay safe everybody. Jeremiah, are you jumping off or are you staying on? Jumping off. All right.

Shannon Hillman:

Thank you Jeremiah.

Michele Hannagan:

Thank you.

Jeremiah Ditch:

Welcome.

Michele Hannagan [27:27]:

All right, so we're going to shift over now to Robin and Kevin for finances and the budget review.

Robin Blew:

Hello everyone. Do you want me to share my screen or does everybody have the reports in front of you or do we want to try to share my screen? What do you think?

Michele Hannagan:

Gosh. Yeah, Robin, sorry. I forgot to unmute. It might be helpful to share your screen even though we've got it. I'm seeing a lot of head nods.

Robin Blew:

Okay, so what do I just do? I'm new at this. Just hit the green button?

Michele Hannagan:

Yep. There's a green button on the bottom that says share screen. I think that would do it.

Robin Blew:

Now let me see which one it is here, hold on. I think this is it right here. Okay. Now do I have to bring it over to this screen? I have it on a different screen, so I have to bring it over to this screen, is that what I have to do? Is that working guys?

Michele Hannagan:

We can't see anything other than all of our heads so far. Okay. Something's started happening. There we go.

Robin Blew:

You see it?

Michele Hannagan:

Yep.

Robin Blew:

Okay. All right, so this is usually what I start with. Everybody can see it okay? All right.

Shannon Hillman:

Can you zoom in a little?

Robin Blew:

How do I do that? Let's see. Is it through... Where do I put it through?

Michele Hannagan:

On the Excel sheet. The lower right... Yeah,

Robin Blew:

Okay. There you go. Like that? Is that better guys?

Shannon Hillman:

Great.

Michele Hannagan:

Yep.

Robin Blew:

Now what I do? Just go back over here. Is that good? All right. So let me look at my notes here. So basically the revenue issues that we've been having month over month is pretty much been just because of that RCSD that I keep mentioning each time, that when we add the budget time that was 14,095 but it's really 13,009, 95... Can you guys see when I do that? Somebody answer me. I don't know if you guys can see it.

Shannon Hillman:

Yes

Robin Blew:

Okay. So that's where that variance is coming from. The grants is just that was the leftover from the dissemination. Some of the Title money we'll be getting in as it goes, but we only recognize it as it's encumbered when we have the actual salaries, like Social Worker and some of the expenditures like i-Ready and things like that, we can discuss down here for... We've discussed all these things before. So the expense lines pretty much are coming in. There's nothing new this particular time to report on. The variances are the same variances that we've had...

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Robin Blew:

... and to report on. The variances are the same variances that we've had through the same reasons. There's nothing really new to report. I'll go through it again, the food service obviously next month will be different, because of the school closure but this is a report as of February 29th. So, we're not going to see a lot of the different expenditures that might be last, which are primarily going to be just in food service expenditure and field study. And field study might still go up a little bit, Maureen can chime in on this.

Robin Blew:

I think most of the field study trips were done as of February, but I think we're going to have some expenditures hitting the credit card statement for March. So, you might not see anything different for March, because I just looked at the March statement and there aren't a lot of field study expenses for the last trip that they had. The administration isn't anything different here. The administrative benefits was an error in our original budget that is going to be fixed for our next budget season. Also, can be offset by some of the other line items that are always added.

Robin Blew:

Basically not, we haven't spent all the money. The river room benefits as well are always a little bit lower, so that's going to even out. Then instruction, there isn't anything new there. I think last our board meeting that I didn't attend because of my daughter's birthday. The substitute line was higher and as you can see, I had some notes over here on the side, which I think might not have come over to you guys

last time. We had a sabbatical and a maternity leave going on at the exact same time, so that's what's driving that variance. Any questions there?

Shannon Hillman:

Nope.

Robin Blew:

Okay. The professional development, I think somebody had a question about that, but I don't really see why there would have been a question for that, it's just barely over budget and I don't really think there's anything interesting in that category to report on. Anybody wants to chime in, go ahead, but I don't think there is. Going down to the instructional supplies and computers and office supplies. The computers and technology are basically the teacher laptop. I don't think any of the other purchases are hitting in the February timeframe.

Robin Blew:

Then going down into the other... I think somebody had questions on some business services. That's pretty much been a little bit over budget. Traditionally, it always is over budget, but it was primarily because of these issues of the CPR training. The great frame up, some teachers were paid some additional money to work on the renewal, and also the BKT retreat bill was in there as well. Insurance, we know we have more coverage this year and Shannon and I did up that line item for next year, because we knew that we had more coverage. So, we will be over budget in that line item for this year by the end.

Robin Blew:

I know that the rent, we still have skipped that other bill from them at some point, so that's pretty what's driving that there. Good news, is we're still totally in the black. Expenses here for, 2,000,019, last year 2,000,028, that's why there's just nothing new or surprising with this budget review. The revenue, we know why that is where it is, is because of the difference with that, and plus we don't have as many grants as we had last year, so we're in good shape. Can I move on to the balance sheet or does anybody have questions?

Shannon Hillman:

I don't see any hands.

Michele Hannagan:

I'm good.

Robin Blew:

Everybody good? Okay. All right, so we'll go to the balance sheet then. I think there's a couple differences than what was put on the drive. I tried to go in and put-

Michele Hannagan:

Can you zoom Robin, a little bit please?

Robin Blew:

Can I what?

Michele Hannagan:

Zoom.

Robin Blew:

Zoom? I'm sorry. There we go, let me zoom. Is that... Oh, that wasn't the right way. Is that better guys or more?

Michele Hannagan:

Yep. No, it's good.

Robin Blew:

Okay. So our cash flow is pretty strong, we had to raise that restriction. This is our dissolution from 75 to a 100, because of that new rule. We still have a little bit of money, we call it the cash reserve. That's just basically just a little extra money that we have outside of our operating checking account. This is the investment total of 1,016,839 that was as of June 30th, that's the way we always choose to report it. I'm just refreshing people's memories because I have to report on the fact that we were doing pretty good, but then with the market downturn, this is actually 331.

Robin Blew:

I'm sorry, this is actually 331 here. We've got the fidelity statement, I'm reporting on as of March because I thought that everybody would be interested for the market fluctuations. And Kevin can chime in if he wishes, but... Looking, it's not great, it did take a loss. But, this portfolio is built to withstand a lot of market fluctuations. So, as you can see the Vanguard, went down significantly, but the fidelity actually went up as of March. So, not really sure what the April statements is going to show, that'll be interesting. But right now, at least it's only a 6700 loss. That's pretty decent for the size portfolio I think. Kevin, do you want to chime in at all on that?

Kevin Sutherland:

So, all I'll say is at that point in time, the market was down over 20%. So, if this was based more in equities, we would have seen more of a \$200,000 loss. What I did look at today, the stock markets bouncing back a little bit, it was up to 24 yesterday, so. But, like Robin said, this portfolio is not going to bounce around as much. It's been built to stay pretty steady and we're not going to have huge gains. But, the value of it won't change much with big changes in the market.

Robin Blew:

Does anyone have any more questions about that or are we good?

Michele Hannagan:

Just to comment... It's Michelle. To Kevin and the finance committee, thanks for being so smart about those investments.

Robin Blew :

Okay.

Kevin Sutherland:

Well, I got to give a shout out to Lyle Beech, and he did come to visit with us a couple of years ago to talk about this, and he set it up initially and it's done very well.

Robin Blew:

Okay. Then I'll continue on with just a couple of things that I just wanted to note on here. As you can see, great job for making sure that we get the districts to pay us. We'll look at the accounts receivable compared to last year at this time, to this year at this time. And, I bet if we looked, it's probably the exact same people that haven't paid us yet. So, that's pretty good to have that little over receivable. Prepaid expenditures is primarily just the leasehold improvements, it's really not much else in there any more. It's a little bit of some of the BOSIS and some of the business services that I amortize out over the year, but nothing new to report that we have prepaid like a major expense that we prepaid yet.

Robin Blew:

Accounts payables very low, crude payroll is just our nice summer spreaders, crude expenses, the retirement deductions payable and just some various withholdings from the employees that we pay out on their behalf to different vendors for Aflac and things like that. The pension is their portion of the New York state retirement, and then the under-in revenue is just some of the field studies, and some of the SEL that we still haven't had any expenditures to offset their revenue. So we're still in good shape, cashflow wise, receivable wise and our bills are very, very low. Any questions?

Michele Hannagan:

Not from me.

Robin Blew:

So, my notes were just pretty much this little thing that is still work-in-progress. I'm trying to figure out what people really want on this little dashboard, but Mark had said that he wanted awhile ago back. So, just to give you a snapshot that's showing you where we are just for bottom-line in revenue. These are the things I've already talked about. And the site seminar was profitable, we already talked about the investments, so there really isn't anything that we haven't talked about on this page. Any questions about it?

Michele Hannagan:

Nope.

Robin:

Nope? Okay.

Mark Schiesser:

Robin, has that been sent out to us? I apologize.

Robin Blew:

Yes, I did send it. The only thing that I changed on it since when you got it was, I put in this fidelity amount and I think I added the investment note. But, other than that it was fine and I can re-share this.

Mark Schiesser:

Great, thank you.

Shannon Hillman:

I think there was a question from Jess first. I don't know if she still has the question and then Michelle Burack.

Robin:

Okay.

Jessica Nordquist:

My question was just, is there any way that we are putting money back into the budget, because we're saving money on facilities costs or anything like that, or are we still running at the same expenditure?

Robin Blew:

I think we're not going to have anything for facilities because we still have to pay rent. But, I think that what we were talking about is that we're definitely going to have some savings in the food service and in the field studies. I'm not really sure if we're going to have much savings anywhere else because it's not really any of our expenditures. I don't think we are going to go down except for those categories, right Shannon?

Shannon Hillman:

Maybe some savings in professional development?

Robin Blew:

Yeah, that's right.

Shannon Hillman:

We're going to talk a little bit about this later, but one of the advisements that we were given from the State was to consider pre-paying for some expenses that we already know about for next year and doing it this year since we have a surplus. So, that when we have a lower per pupil allocation next year, we will already have dealt with some of those expenses ahead of time. So, that's one thing we're going to talk about when we share with you some notes about what we're considering for our budget for next year. Michelle, did you want to say something? Michelle Burack?

Michelle Burack:

Just, I know we had mentioned at the March meeting that there might have been some payments from families for field studies that are now canceled. I didn't know if the Boston trip, that people had already sent in deposits, or is that something that is going to come out? It's probably a trivial amount relative to the total field study. But, I didn't know what the budget impact would be on that.

Shannon Hillman:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Robin Blew:

Yeah, but that's where I'm saying the field studies revenue will go down and expenses will go down, because any trip that didn't happen, we refunded the parents and I believe there was a lot of that going on with Lisa O'Malley and Maureen took care of that in March. Because remember, the school didn't shut down until March 15th. It will be reflected in the March report.

Maureen Milke:

Yep. All the Boston payments have been refunded to all the families.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. Any other questions?

Michelle Burack:

Thank you.

Robin Blew:

You're welcome.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. Thank you Robin. Thank you, Kevin.

Robin Blew:

Okay. Now, I got to unshare here.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah. Yeah.

Shannon Hillman:

I think you go up to the top.

Robin:

Stop share?

Shannon Hillman:

Stop share. Yep.

Robin Blew:

There we go.

Shannon Hillman:

Here we go. Okay.

Michele Hannagan [42.02]:

All right. Next thing is the approval of the minutes. So, I'm hoping when folks have had a chance to look at it, if we need to we can put them up on the screen. Do you think Shannon, we ought to do that?

Shannon Hillman:

I think it'd be wise to approve the minutes tonight. I'm really trying to get minutes-

Michele Hannagan:

I mean to put them up on the screen?

Shannon Hillman:

Oh, yeah, yeah. I think that'd be wise too.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay.

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah. I just think that we want to get everything updated on our website as soon as possible.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah. So, I'm going to open up the minutes and I'll share my screen.

Michelle Burack:

The most important piece is that somehow I wind up not having anyone absent and I know that cannot be true, so I need to get an accurate attendance list. I think I just forgot to copy, paste people's name into the absent list. So, if you know you were not at the meeting last month, please let me know.

Shannon Hillman:

I think Ann Marie was not there and she doesn't seem to be here tonight either. Am I right about that?

Michele Hannagan:

I think Ann Marie came in late, if I'm not mistaken.

Shannon Hillman:

Oh, did she come in late?

Michelle Burack:

I thought she was out of town?

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah, I think I remember that.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay.

Becki Mason:

Yeah, Shannon I think she was, she was out of town.

Michele Hannagan:

Oh, okay. I can't remember who came in late. I was there.

Nolica Murray-Fields

This is Nolica, I wasn't here. [inaudible 00:13:18].

Mark Schiesser:

Mark, came in late.

Jessica Nordquist:

Rebecca Boyle was absent.

Shannon Hillman:

I think Rebecca is now technically off, so I don't know if she's on our list or not. But, I feel like... It was maybe January or February that we said that she was resigning from the board.

Michele Hannagan:

And Cheryl both?

Shannon Hillman:

No, no, no Rebecca, Cheryl is here right now.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. Okay.

Shannon Hillman:

And, I think Cheryl was here last month too.

Michelle Burack:

Okay. Sorry, I lost track. Okay, so Rebecca has resigned.

Michele Hannagan:

Oh shoot. I'm getting an error. I can't share... [inaudible 00:00:44:15].

Shannon Hillman:

All right.

Michele Hannagan:

Shannon, are you able to pull up the minutes to share your screen?

Shannon Hillman:

Yep, I'll try in a second.

Michele Hannagan:

Let's see if I can do it.

Michele Burack:

The one other section to draw your attention to. There's a section about the Charter Renewal Update, and I deleted all the stuff that had been just my stream of consciousness transcription of our dialogue and tried to distill it to something succinct that expressed our displeasure. But, in slightly coded language. So, if you're going to focus extra attention on one section, just making sure that that contains the things that we discussed in the board actions around the revisions that Shannon had to do on very short notice and feedback. I think it's toward the end...

Shannon Hillman:

Down here?

Michelle Burack:

Keep going. It's after the RMSC partnership I'm pretty sure. Nope.

Michelle Burack:

That's the [inaudible 00:45:39] issue. I'm sorry.

Shannon Hillman:

It's okay.

Michelle Burack:

Right above Personnel. That one.

Shannon Hillman:

That one?

Michelle Burack:

Charter Renewal Update. Just making sure I'm not saying anything in there that would get us in trouble when the Regents review our minutes.

Shannon Hillman:

I think it's okay.

Michele Hannagan:

I think it is too.

Michelle Burack:

Okay. That was the only one that gave me fits, but the rest of it is just documenting our thinking around all the school closure stuff, that became mute less than 48 hours later.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. So, are we clear on the attendance?

Michelle Burack:

I have Nolica, Ann Marie and Rebecca as absent and everybody else was there.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay.

Michelle Burack:

So, I will go through and edit to update the voting rosters and the numbers. Those XX's is for the numbers offline after the meeting, and then upload the final draft. As long as there's no other changes.

Michele Hannagan:

Let's see, typo of Lauren Grimm's name, is Lauren Grimes. It should read Lauren Grimm.

Michelle Burack:

Grim. Right, I wasn't sure about Keri Gonzalez's name too. Grim. Thank you.

Shannon Hillman:

I think you've got Keri Gonzalez. Correct.

Michelle Burack:

Okay.

Michele Hannagan:

And, I think there's a spot where my name is misspelled. I don't remember where it was, but it caught my eyes, like one of the little red squiggles.

Michelle Burack:

Sorry.

Michele Hannagan:

No, it's okay. I don't really care, I just don't know if it creates an issue with it being misspelled.

Michelle Burack:

Yeah. I will search and replace to make sure I get them all.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah. Okay.

Shannon Hillman:

And then Michelle, it looks like at least this motion for minutes, does not have a number because of the attendance. So, are you going to go through and just make those-

Michelle Burack:

All of them where there's an XX is, because I need the attendance list in order to generate that number. So, I'll populate the place where it says replace with attendance list and I will update the number. I'll just do a search and replace for that and then I'll be done. Sorry for the oversight.

Michele Hannagan:

It's okay.

Michelle Burack:

I just want to make sure for today's... Is Annemarie the only board member not on the call? Because, I can't see everybody on the screen. Is Traci-

Shannon Hillman:

I think Annemarie is not in here.

Michelle Burack:

Okay.

Shannon Hillman:

Everybody else is here except for Rebecca too. But, I think Rebecca comes off, I think.

Michelle Burack:

Yeah, I got it.

Shannon Hillman:

Okay.

Michelle Burack:

Okay, thank you.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay, so with that and the suggestions to make the edits, can I get a motion to approve the March minutes? You'll have to unmute yourself and make a motion.

Shannon Hillman:

Let me unmute everyone.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay.

Jess Nordquist:

I'll make a motion to approve the March minutes.

Marcia Joy:

I'll second it.

Michele Hannagan:

All right, so just made a motion. Marcia seconded. All those in favor? Aye.

Board members:

Aye.

Michele Hannagan:

Opposed? Abstentions? Okay. Motion carries. Thank you. Shannon. Turning it over to you for school leader update.

Shannon Hillman:

Oh boy! Okay. Just want to make sure we're good. So, I'm going to mute everybody again, but you can unmute yourself if you need to. Okay. So let me share my screen just wow. Okay. I'm going to share my desktop I guess and bring it back to here. Let's see... Here we go. So, we get a power point tonight. This might be what we do from here on out, we'll see. What I can't see is the chat box. So, and I can't see the managing of participants. So if somebody has a question, I am okay if you would like to just interrupt me or if Michele, if you're able to manage that.

Michele Hannagan:

I can certainly watch. I would say, put a question in the chat box and I'll be able to see that quickly, because I've got the chat box visual screen minimized so I can see the full...

Shannon Hillman:

Okay, great. Thank you. So, my School Leader updates are many and part of it is because I wanted to make sure that even though we are away, I'm still updating you with the things I normally would update you with in a given meeting. And knowing that May always seems to be a really busy month of items to approve and work through, so I just wanted to make sure that I updated you on some things. So, we're going to talk about the Family and Student Culture and Climate Survey Data. We'll Look at our attendance up until our closure, but then also through our closure. Our Discipline Data Report, I'm going to give you a little bit of information about that.

Shannon Hillman:

So those are normal calendar items. I'm also going to go into a little bit more detail talking about the GCCS response to Coronavirus in our closure, give you some Lottery updates and then look at the calendar for review and potentially approve. I actually didn't think we'd be able to approve, but I think we can if we would like to. So, to start with Family Culture and Climate Survey Data, there's the family piece and then there's the student piece, and I'm actually going to start with students, because in sharing my screen, I don't have to jump around.

Shannon Hillman:

So, if you later at your leisure, if you want to click on these Student Culture and Climate Survey Data, you're actually going to get the survey itself, so you won't get their responses. But you'll see how the survey was laid out this year, which is different than how we laid it out last year. This year, because we had that social-emotional learning grant that our social worker and Alexis received, they wanted to make sure that we were taking data on our effectiveness, especially around some of the things that we were doing with zones of regulation. And so, there's some prompts in there that are specific to how students are able to articulate their feelings, their ability to make decisions in the moment, so there's some scenario prompts.

Shannon Hillman:

And then, there were three prompts that Staci Intrilligator from EL Education and I, and the PD advisory crew pulled out as three that we were going to track over time. Now, it's likely that we won't be able to track more until next year, but we had planned to do this at the end of the year, we'll see, maybe we'll still can. In those three statements students answered where; I feel respected and included by my teachers, I speak up when I see someone being mean to others, and I want to learn things that will help me make a positive impact on the school. And, these were under the umbrellas of our character traits, so respect, courage, and then the last one was responsibility, and we were for progress over time.

Shannon Hillman:

So, what you're seeing is the students that answered either agree or strongly agree to those statements. And W stands for White, and OC stands for Of Color. So 87% of our white students feel respected and included by their teachers overall for the whole school, so this was kindergarten through sixth grade this year, different from last year where we just did fourth through sixth grade. 83% students of color were respected, included, so you can look through.

Shannon Hillman:

As far as being courageous, there was no difference in white students versus students of color except for 1%. And then again, there was no difference overall for the students feeling like they want to learn things that'll help make a positive impact on the school. So, overall we were looking to see if there was a discrepancy in how students of color were answering compared to our white students. Overall, it looks like there isn't a discrepancy. I will be transparent with you that when you start to get down to grade levels, there was some difference.

Shannon Hillman:

And so, one of the things we did in February, I think, or maybe just after this... Yeah, I think it was in February, we had teachers to look at their own classroom responses and talk together as a team about how those children responded. It was anonymous, so they were looking at just their whole class and the racial differences, and then thinking about equity on a larger level and implicit bias. And so, it was just folding right into the work that we were doing before we closed. So, that's the Student Culture and Climate Data. And now, I have to stop presenting I think to get you the family culture.

Shannon Hillman:

Hopefully you can still see my desktop with my many tabs and very busy stuff. Okay. So, this is a summary of the Family Culture and Climate Survey. And, this survey was almost identical to what we had last year and it was administered again at during the student-led conference time. So, this was mid-

February here. And so, we have just a summary of the overarching answers to everything. So, it starts with communication. These are the top three ways that the families received communication through newsletters, emails and backpack mail, and I have to say that this was really important for us to know as we were moving into closure.

Shannon Hillman:

So, we've been doing most of our communication through email. Very little is going home through mail, because things are rapidly changing and so we wanted to make sure that email was working and, it's very much working for our families along with phone calls. Family Engagement; the families say that they are staying engaged through Community Circle, they identified ice skating as one of the top ways that they are involved and the family picnic. And I have to say, I was really surprised by ice skating. It definitely is a well-attended event, I didn't realize it was so popular in that way.

Shannon Hillman:

We asked about... This was actually from the FA. They wanted just to get a sense as to how many hours people are volunteering. We don't want families to feel like it is an absolute requirement, but it is highly encouraged. And so, we wanted to know where we were, and you can see it's quite a range of involvement. And, we talked about barriers, and again, work hours is the largest barrier. So, there's great comments that were scattered throughout, we gave you a sampling of some of those comments. This is where the families are, when you think about inclusion with teachers.

Shannon Hillman:

So, green is somewhat agree and purple is strongly agree. So, we have a really large percentage of our families feeling like they can be open and honest with their children's teachers. And, this feels pretty good too, being honest with the school leader. So overall, this is very similar to what it was last year. And then, Feeling Respected And Included By The Children's Teachers; again is really strong. So overall, these are great numbers. And then, other families, this was a mix last year too, and it proves to still be somewhat of a mix.

Shannon Hillman:

Although, it makes sense when you know more of the interactions are happening with staff and families directly rather than family-to-family, so we're still working on that. That's something that diversity committee has their eyes on. This question, we wondered if people just knew where to go when they had a question, and it looks like most of our people know exactly where to go, so. This was just perhaps one or two people. They're more great comments overall, and then we talked about our program strengths, learning expeditions, community-based clinic curriculum, and arts integration, classroom management and... Oh, I'm sorry and in school culture, we're tied.

Shannon Hillman:

Classroom management and discipline is still considered an area of challenge. And, I'd like to dig a little deeper into that, which I have not done yet. To look at again, our families of color versus our white families to see if there's a discrepancy, which there was last year. And so, I like to move forward into that. There's still some really amazing comments and some really valid feedback around... And, I think it's later on, but there's feedback around the feeling that we need them.

Shannon Hillman:

There's feedback around the feeling that we need a greater diverse staff. We know this and we are certainly trying to work on that. This one was interesting. An area for children to go quickly when they're having a difficult time before it becomes a problem. I think we've talked about having some sort of recovery room, so it's clear that it's in family's minds too. This idea of restorative justice training, that's something that we are working on. But it's almost like they are in complete alignment with where we know we need to grow. So that's really good news. And then this is just the makeup of the parents that we had overall. So I will pause there while I'm going back to my PowerPoint with culture and climate. Does anyone have any questions so far with what I've shared?

Shannon Hillman:

Oops. All right. All right, so attendance, let's see if I can get back to presenting again. That was a little, well, I'll just make my window bigger, there you go. Okay. So attendance up until, so I had Maureen print out a print up of March 10th, we actually closed on March 13th. But the last couple of days as you remember, it was right in the thick of the closure already starting, it was in the air. And so some families were already starting to keep their students home. So I didn't feel like that was a true attendance rate. But we're sitting at about 96% which is very typical of our years. It's usually around 96, 97% so we are in a great average rate. So this is from the beginning of the year all the way through and for grade level.

Shannon Hillman:

But then I thought you would be curious about attendance since closure. And since we are in this place right now with my desktop, I can share with you the way that we take attendance. But what I did is we are having teachers take attendance every day. So that means that they have some sort of indication that students are engaging with what they're putting out there, whether it's joining in on a Zoom meeting, doing an exit ticket like Jeremiah described. Commenting on or working through a task on Seesaw. So any form of engagement is attending. And so on March 17th which was shortly after the closure was that first week of closure, we had already 85% that we had somehow gotten a hold of and that also was phone calls. April 10th which is last week we were at 89%. and that's a really good percentage considering that our normal average percentage is 96%. so I just want to reiterate again that it is, of course we have those kids in mind that we aren't getting on a daily basis, but we largely have a plan for them.

Shannon Hillman:

For instance, there's a family I know that can't work with their kids during the week. And so does a lot of catch up on the weekends. And so those teachers are sort of backlogging after they see that the students have engaged with the work. So it's really exciting.

Michele Hannagan:

This is Michele, I got to jump in. That's remarkable.

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah, it really is.

Michele Hannagan:

That number is stunning.

Shannon Hillman:

It really is, it's amazing.

Michele Hannagan:

It's quite remarkable. Yeah, just kudos to you guys. It's amazing.

Michelle Burack:

Do you have any comparator data, just to know how amazing we are?

Michele Hannagan:

Let me tell you, I hear loads from Joanie about the city school district. So this is why I'm saying it.

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah. I don't have comparative data. The first week or two we were, and I'll talk more about this later, but I've been on meetings with Rochester Charter leaders and certainly there are many, many schools that are putting out lots and lots of lessons and daily instruction from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM and we made a commitment that we weren't going to do that, but we were going to put something out that was realistic and still got to important content, but was also meeting children's needs and family's needs. And it seems that we are getting more attendance than a school that might be having a full day. We are also well aware that we are an elementary school and I think there is a different standard for high schools. So that's something else we can talk about too.

Shannon Hillman:

But the attendance report. So I really don't want to show student names so I'm going to try to quick scan. I can't do it. Okay, well you can quick see, I wish I could hide these. You can quick see that this is how we're doing it. It's like a huge table that allows us to look at dates, whether they're present absent, absent excused. So like the family said the child is actually sick and they're not going to be part of whatever's happening today or unexcused. And then the teachers are naming how they know whether or not they're present. And so it's working really well and it's kind of the first steps to some sort of accountability grade-ish book to allow them to be able to kind of see how much the children are doing as far as work in the course of a day and a week.

Michelle Burack:

Can I ask a question about teacher workload in that context? Because this is obviously a much more cumbersome way to record attendance than simply looking at who's in your room every morning. So just on balance with having to engineer brand new content delivery, this is coming?

Shannon Hillman:

So I would say that every week we get better and better at having stronger systems. Including me, there were lots of tears the first week and the second week and lots of like, "What are you asking me to do?" And now we are finally really getting into a groove. And one of the things that many teams have done is they've utilized their TA. And because the TA is not doing as much instruction, they are the ones that might be making more of the phone calls and they are the ones where they're going on to Google Classroom or onto Seesaw, which are two main platforms and looking and kind of getting a first glance at which students are attending. And in both of those platforms it kind of organizes work and tasks and

what students have done for you. It puts things into folders that are by students. So it makes it easier I think for them to just then transfer it to that table.

Maggie Deutschbein:

May I give the kindergarten example?

Shannon Hillman:

Sure.

Maggie Deutschbein:

So we've divvied up the platforms so that different people are checking different things and it is organized, like Shannon said. I track i-Ready because that's something that you can get a report on like within the past day or over the course of the week, it collects a lot of data for us. Carrie tracks the Epic books logins and we all keep an eye on Seesaw but Sarah does like an evening check and we use the calendar sort of feature on Seesaw where you can actually see who logged in on a given day. And then we've streamlined it so we have like a single group blasted out to the group video each morning because we don't do a live kindergarten meeting. And we can note who did comments, because there for a while as we transitioned we had kids whose families were viewing videos with them and commenting but they weren't necessarily doing anything else yet as they learned the new technology. And so Sarah would go on and look at those as well. And it's gotten a lot faster.

Shannon Hillman:

Great. Thank you, Maggie. Okay, I'm going to move on to the not as great news. So going along with what we had said about family culture and climate data, here's where we are with discipline data. So first all I want you to know that the Discipline Committee met and this data wasn't quite done yet and it's not fully disaggregated yet. So we are going to continue to look at the numbers and get a harder look. But these are just some of the big noticings that we were making just from what we had done. So as of March 10th, 2020 which was the last report that I had as far as a disciplinary action happened. And I should say that these are ones where students are coming to the office and they have to talk to me or Mrs. O'Malley and there's some form of reparation that needs to happen. So we have the same number of entries right now are at that moment as we did for the entire last year. So it seems that there are more entries than we had last year. I wouldn't say that that number is extremely high. It's about 43 entries.

Shannon Hillman:

So that doesn't mean suspensions at all. In fact, we've had very few suspensions. We've had one, two, I think we've had three instances of suspensions this year and one of them, it was a dual suspension for two people. So it's not very many suspensions, but it's still concerning to me that there was a higher number of entries and there's still a disproportionate number of black males involved in discipline measures, which goes with research, but it's still bothersome. It's mostly physical contact, like hitting and then shoving very few resulting in like an actual injury, a physical injury. And the more serious consequences generally occur in the older grades. And I'm not necessarily saying removal from school, but we might have to move to a higher level of repair or restorative work at an older grade. Than in a younger grade where it's more about like just articulating feelings over physical contact.

Shannon Hillman:

Younger grades are usually physical contact or damage to materials or the classroom. So we've had kids this year, a few different kids just have meltdowns and while they're melting down they're throwing things or tipping chairs. There's just been a lot of temper tantrum kinds of things happening.

Shannon Hillman:

And then we have two students now that were red flags for us in the very beginning when we had them as flight risks and so we've had some major instances with flight risks with these two particular students. One is an older student, one is a younger student. And that's sort of newer for us in general. So it's like these are the known facts. We need to dig a little further, but it definitely makes me go, "Hmm." About what we still need in our school in order to feel successful as we kind of move forward. Any questions about that?

Shannon Hillman:

All right, I'm totally switching gears now. So I'm going back to just some of our updates because the last time that we met we weren't even sure that we were closing. We were just social distancing and canceling field studies and that kind of thing. So I wanted to explain to you what's happened since then, which is of course a lot. New York state has given us guidance, it is pretty generalized. In the very beginning the Board of Regions and our authorizers really felt like it was important to give some autonomy to schools to figure out what was best for our own communities. But they did have three buckets. They wanted us to respond to. Our continuity of learning, our feeding plan and then our social, emotional and mental health plans. And we needed to submit those plans about two weeks after we closed.

Shannon Hillman:

And then there was also an option to share a communications plan. And the communications plan I think was actually our strongest, so I did submit that. We had right at the very beginning, as soon as we closed, we had the staff come that first day and to think about how we were going to close our school, knowing that we didn't really know how long we would be closed. But then we also formed these taskforce crews. An instructional task force crew, a family outreach and feeding or I'm sorry, food distribution taskforce crew. Oh, a communications and operations taskforce crew and all of those crews are still moving along and meeting very regularly. And within those crews we had people sort of named as leaders of those crews. And then those leaders are responding to me or I'm meeting with them to make sure that everybody is still on board with where we are.

Shannon Hillman:

The family outreach committee is made up of TAs. Michelle are food service and clerical everything and Lauren Grimm, our social worker. But then we also kind of create an off shoot of a family leadership crew, which is what Michelle Burak was talking about and that's made up of our FA officers, some diversity committee representatives, we have a few staff members, our social worker and then the room parents, the classroom parents. And at the very beginning we asked them, "Are you willing to do some things that we didn't expect you to need to do? Like contacting families on a fairly regular basis to find out what they need, answering questions, helping to support whatever additional sort of basic needs they might need some support." And the majority of the room parents especially said that they were willing to do that. So we've been meeting, at first it was every week and now it's kind of every other week to check in and to hear from each class what families are saying, how things are going. And that's been really, really helpful and helped us kind of keep the pulse on everyone.

Shannon Hillman:

The feeding plan, we are giving out food through Julia Kay twice a week. There's a window of pickup time from 10 to noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays and that provides meals, breakfast and lunch for kids for up until that day and then more meals for the next sort of period of days. Overall it's working really well and we have a staff sign up sheet to help with food distribution. People come and pick it up at the school and then we have a number, not a number, we have a few families that for different reasons aren't leaving their house or aren't able to get to us and so we deliver to them. It's not a huge number. Overall, we are sitting at around 30 students that are participating out of potentially 70 or so students that qualify for free or reduced lunch. But we feel really good that we're able to provide food more individually for them. And then of course many are taking advantage of the community centers and the schools that are also providing food, which we plastered everywhere for people as well.

Shannon Hillman:

The other great thing is that that window of time has provided a window of opportunity for times for families to come and pick up Chromebooks. And we have now 40 Chromebooks out to students. We started with I think seven families needed, but now as our phases of closure have amped up, families are realizing that they need more than one device at home. And so we've been able to get those Chromebooks out to everyone and now I'm getting less and less requests. And yes, everybody has a Chromebook in their hand. I think I only saw one Chromebook sitting on the table and I'm not sure that one was a claimed one, it might be a spare anyway.

Mark Schiesser:

Can I ask a-

Shannon Hillman:

Yes, you can.

Mark Schiesser:

So at our last meeting there was some concern about having the Chromebooks at home and sort of monitoring and what the kids had access to and all that kind of stuff. I admit, it was probably less of a concern on my side. But I just wonder how that's all panned out and if there are any controls or protections or anything like that?

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah, we did hold off on Chromebooks for a while. We had got out those emergency packets. We did that on the Friday before we closed. I'm not expecting to close that quickly, but glad that it worked out. So the packets took the kids through the first two weeks of school. And in those two weeks we made some hard decisions about whether or not we were going to give out Chromebooks. And we decided that we should start with the Chromebooks that are in sixth grade. Those same Chromebooks we were thinking about sending off to sixth graders anyway at the end of the year. And so they were already four years old and ready to be sort of sent on. And so we started with those.

Shannon Hillman:

And then, and we opened it up to everyone. So we had teachers and families asking, I'm sorry, room parents asking families if they wanted a Chromebook. At the same time the IT person and myself and

George, we started to kind of look at the kind of liability or whatever you want to think about as far as taking Chromebooks home. And we put together a Chromebook commitment form that parents have to sign. So they signed it in duplicate. So we kept a copy and then they took a copy with them. It had some maintenance responsibilities and whatnot. And then just it's like details about taking care of it and how to use it.

Shannon Hillman:

Ken was able to kind of like wipe them clean so that there wasn't other things lingering. But we also said, "Be aware that a lot of our restrictions happen when you're in the building, so you really have to monitor your child and their use and that we won't be held liable." So I think it's working pretty well. And we are able to give more Chromebooks if needed. And they are for kindergarten all the way up through sixth grade. So that's working pretty well.

Rebecca Mason:

So the use restrictions, it's on the parents to monitor that there weren't any engineered by Ken into the devices?

Shannon Hillman:

No. Yeah. There wasn't really a way to.

Rebecca Mason:

Right. If you have to use YouTube for content delivery, you can't edit what YouTube videos the kids are going to watch.

Shannon Hillman:

That's right. That's right. And so we put that out in several different ways. And then with everything that's happened with Zoom, I've put out lots of information. I've been trying to, anytime I send like a bigger email to the families, I'm trying to also send it to all of you so that you know what I'm sending. But we've put out some guidance around that as well. And the teachers have had training about how to be more secure in their live instruction.

Shannon Hillman:

The only other bill that I didn't exactly talk about is the New York Charter School Association has been phenomenal. They put together, they're doing twice a week webinars and meetings with all the charter leaders in New York state. It's insane to have a 347 member meeting on Zoom. But it's putting us in front of David Frank and Susie. I cannot remember her last name from SUNY twice a week to ask them the hard questions about guidance and expectations around this closure.

Shannon Hillman:

Along with that, the Rochester Charter leaders are getting together once a week as well and just talking about our own needs, problem solving together, sharing ideas and I have to say that that's probably the most helpful meeting that I have every week. I always get something out of it. The attendance log was a model that I got from one of the other charter leaders in the area and so it's been super, super helpful and I'm very grateful that the New York Charter School Association has been putting that together for

us. And so we are prepaying that membership for next year because they've been excellent. Are there any other questions regarding our response?

Michele Hannagan:

Once again, great job.

Shannon Hillman:

Thanks.

Mark Schiesser:

It's amazing. It's really a really amazing.

Shannon Hillman:

I did just if you are interested for your reading pleasure, I did put the plans that I submitted to the State into our Ford folder so you're welcome to read them. They are meant to be fluid, they're meant to be changing. And we're supposed to be getting feedback on it. I have not received that feedback yet. But I have had a call with Susan about our plans and overall she was very, I don't know, she seems very satisfied with what we were doing. One of the important things that I just want to name is we have to make sure that our students who have an IEP are receiving services. And I'm just going to put this out publicly that our special education teachers that are provided to us through RCSD that we've had for the last few years, have been amazing.

Shannon Hillman:

They have been providing either one on one tutoring or helping with teacher instruction, making phone calls, whatever it is that we need, they are doing that. And I have never said you are required because I know that they are RCSD employees. But they have done that out of the kindness of their own heart. And now RCSD is finally putting out guidance saying that that is okay to do. So now we're good to go. But I think Susan was most impressed with that, that we have been able to help provide services for those students. And that includes OT and PT and some of the providers that are only with us a little bit, they have also reached out and worked with our kids. So it's really exciting.

Michelle Burack:

Are these services in person or virtual?

Shannon Hillman:

Virtual. Virtual or over the phone. Yep. Yes.

Mark Schiesser:

I have a random question and that is, the last meeting we were talking about getting into the April meeting as far as the regions were concerned and as far as the renewal. And I just wondered if there's any update on that? Maybe you forgot to tell us that we had a five year renewal.

Michele Hannagan:

That's on the agenda Mark.

Shannon Hillman:

Yes it is. It's later on in the agenda. So we will talk about that.

Mark Schiesser:

I'm sorry for [crosstalk 00:25:16].

Shannon Hillman:

No, that's okay. All right. I'm going to move on to the next slide. So lottery updates. Woo. We had a really successful lottery and if you want to see it you can watch it on our website. We were told that the lottery, of course it has to be public but it could be done through something public like Zoom or Facebook live. It had to be recorded and transcribed and the transcription and recording had to be available within a reasonable amount of time. Well we had it up before noon, which was amazing and the lottery was at 9:00 AM this morning.

Shannon Hillman:

We had 30 open kindergarten seats and that includes sibling applicants, but we only had 11 sibling or staff children apply. So all of those kindergarten siblings and staff children got in and then we had an additional 19 in district and within those 19, there was one set of twins that were offered and already 17 have already accepted. We had one that was, we made the offer, they withdrew and that is likely. And actually Maureen said that in the notes it said that that person had applied to another school and clearly wanted to go to that school instead and that was fine. And then of the 17 that have already accepted, two siblings have not accepted yet. So we expect them to. And we already made an offer to the first person on our wait list because we had the one withdrawal.

Shannon Hillman:

So we are in great shape. We've started to mail out enrollment packets to those families. Right now we don't have openings in first through fifth. And we have three first grade siblings that are waiting to get in the of current GCCS students. So if we have openings in first grade, we'll be taking a few siblings, but other than that it will mostly be new families.

Michele Hannagan:

Congratulations. Woo hoo.

Shannon Hillman:

Yes. And then it was very clear to us from a conversation that we had with Susan that the lottery needed to be done by a person who was not related to anyone in the school or an employee of the school or a board member. And they couldn't be related to anyone who was applying to get into the school. So we asked Theron who is a security officer through the RMSC, we asked him to push the button for us. So he was in the room with me this morning and at the time of the pushing of the button, he did that part. And so it was fun to have him with us and we felt like we were in complete compliance with our lottery. So there we go. Any questions about that?

Shannon Hillman:

Okay. Okay. I think this is it and then I'll be able to stop talking for a bit. So the calendar. In my Rochester Charter Leader meeting, I just asked the other charter schools, I said, "So what's the deal? Are you

putting out a calendar right away? Are you getting it approved right away? It feels really funny to be doing this when it feels like we don't even know what's happening tomorrow." And the other leaders said that this week they were getting their calendars approved. Our RCSD did get their calendar approved and it's on their website, including many of the other districts. And it looks like what they're doing is they're putting out a general calendar as if there isn't going to be any concern about COVID.

Michele Hannagan:

Ha.

Shannon Hillman:

Yes. Yeah, right. One of the things that Susan said to me in the phone call was she wanted me to start thinking or everybody wants leaders to start thinking about reentry plans and what might be different if we are out the rest of the year and how to enter them in next year. And so I did have some big considerations about, "Do I want to add some extra days?" But I'm not sure that that would really get to the heart of the issue. It feels like we just need to be ready in other sort of intervention ways and especially taking care of them mentally and socially and emotionally.

PART 3 OF 5 ENDS [01:30:04]

Shannon Hillman:

Mentally and socially and emotionally. So, this draft calendar, I can, can I make it bigger? I don't know if I can make it bigger. It is in your drive. This draft calendar is very much the same of what we've had before. But I did add extra emergency makeup days, which are professional development days that we have throughout the year, so that if we do have stints where we're out, we can use some of that time. One of the things that's happening right now is, if we are closed per an executive order, as long as we are closed under that order, we won't lose funding under the 180 days that we need to have of instruction. And that's for this year. I would guess that if there's another big sort of ebb and flow, there'll be some other kind of guidance for us, so that we don't have to do so much makeup on our own. Because it will likely be a regional or a statewide closure, is my guess. But we could for the calendar, write some sort of disclaimer that it's subject to change due to COVID-19. So this is open for discussion.

Michele Hannagan:

Shannon, did Susan or David give any guidance, or anyone else, about what that last point you made, relative to the '20-'21 school year? Should we be making some kind of a statement with the calendar, that it is subject to change?

Shannon Hillman:

I don't think they've really given much guidance. I think they're telling us to be flexible in our thinking.

Michele Hannagan:

I ask because if they haven't given any, the reality is we're all of the subject, we're all subject to the governor's executive orders, and the health commissioner, et cetera. So I don't think we have big worries with regard to that.

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah.

Michele Hannagan:

So unless David has explicitly said you need to put something in writing that this is a draft, or whatever, subject to change. Excuse me, relative to COVID-19, I'm not sure we actually need to say that cause we're all on the same big boat.

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah. And there doesn't really seem to be any disclaimers on the other calendars that have gone out. But today some of the leaders talked about maybe saying something, like when they send the calendar out to families to say, heads up this could change.

Michele Hannagan:

That's not a bad idea. And the emergency makeup days that you put in, are those similar in count to what you do year over year? Or is there something in addition because of COVID?

Shannon Hillman:

Well, for last year's calendar I put in two makeup days, because I was noticing that other districts were kind of naming, these are the days that we're going to make up if we have a snow day.

Michele Hannagan:

I see.

Shannon Hillman:

And so it felt like we should put in four. Just kind of put in more, and scattered throughout the year rather than just at the end of the year, knowing that this could be something that we deal with in the fall. So these are two more than you've normally done? Yeah, although certainly we could use, we could take other professional development days. I think we have like 11 or 12 professional development days, like in the course of our school year. So we could take a whole bunch of them if we had to.

Michele Hannagan:

So you're looking for more input or questions, and then we need to approve this. So anyone have any other input for Shannon?

Michelle Burack:

I think mainly for clarity of communication with families, putting the subject to change on the document makes a lot of sense. We all know that there's no certainty anymore, but just to put it on there as is, this will be the calendar assuming life goes back to normal. Just naming it on the, if we're going to put the document out there, just naming it on the document. Because families are going to be looking at this.

Allison Schultes:

I just had a question. So if you were to reopen, you wouldn't, like school wouldn't go later into the summer or like your days or your days I guess is my question?

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah.

Allison Schultes:

Or is that a, we have no idea?

Shannon Hillman:

Do you mean for this year, Allison or next year?

Allison Schultes:

So like if we were to reopen in say like, June 3rd, I don't know, which might be like a Saturday. But anyway, or like a month from now, would you tack extra days on to try and make up some classroom time?

Shannon Hillman:

I might. That is something that I've thought about. So the kind of good news to this year is that first of all, the executive order went in two days after we had closed as a county. So there were only two days that we would technically need to sort of make-up. And from those two days, one of them could be a snow day. Because, we only had one other snow day. So we would only have one day to make up.

Shannon Hillman:

But we also are ending our year, this year, a week earlier than RCSD was supposed to end. So that would be a whole other week where we could get busing, and it still is like within the month of June. So I thought about if we do come back this year, that maybe we do want one more week to just try to get a little bit more time with the kids before they go into their summer. And then I also thought about potentially giving some sort of stipends or something, to some teachers that are willing to do some over the summer tutoring. But actually, Allison, I'm glad you asked that question because you know some of my wonders around summer school, or tutoring, or anything is around space. And so I'm not sure we'll have space if the camps are still happening, but I'm not sure if the camps are happening, and I'm sure you're not really sure either. So there's just like a lot of unknowns right now.

Allison Schultes:

Yeah, I think you know, we don't have any anything nailed down either, so just keep us in the loop when you know stuff and we'll do the same.

Shannon Hillman:

Okay.

Jessica Nordquist:

So Shannon, Oh sorry.

Michele Hannagan:

Go ahead, Jess. I was just going to ask if anybody had any other comments.

Jessica Nordquist:

Yeah, I was just going to say too, the five days instruction and five days of work by the, during spring break because spring break was canceled, too. I'm wondering if that possibly offsets, or if because it was a state mandate that can't, based on teacher contracts and everything else?

Shannon Hillman:

I'm not really sure. It's been very gray. This whole, that whole spring break thing, and I'll go back to what David said about this. It's not really taking seat time. So all of this instruction isn't necessarily counting towards our 180 days. It's just what they expect us to do, to kind of keep kids on track for learning. So it's not like an even exchange per se, but it is something I think we can kind of chalk up to say that our school continued to operate through that spring break.

Michele Hannagan:

Others? If not, how about we, I'll entertain, I'll actually make a motion to approve the calendar with the suggestion of the addition as Michelle noted about communication around subjectivity to change. Need a second?

Kevin Sutherland:

It's Kevin, I'll second.

Michele Hannagan:

Thanks Kevin. All right. All those in favor of approving the 2020-2021 school calendar say aye. Aye. Opposed? Abstentions?

Michele Hannagan:

All right, that's approved. And I wanted to just give folks an update. I did send Annmarie a quick text cause I was a little concerned about her not being here, and her grandmother passed away. So she's with her family right now. So I just sent her a text giving her our best. But I just thought I would share that so everyone knew. Okay. So, ever the meeting facilitator am I, 7:15 and I'm going to work really hard to keep us moving along. We still do have a lot to cover, so we're going to, just kind of, [inaudible 00:01:39:32]. So, I'm going to skip right to the Discipline Committee and Jess.

Jessica Nordquist:

Yeah. Hi. Nolica feel free to unmute and just chime in with me. We had a meeting Monday where we looked over the discipline data, and just started to think about what sort of needs exist based on what the data is showing us.

Jessica Nordquist:

Also, we had the pleasure of right before break, hearing out from all the sixth graders, about their four cities trip and their vision for what would be needed for the restorative work to really become a key piece of the school next year. So they kind of shared out some of their findings around really needing to have somebody who was facilitating it, who was leading the charge, who was training, who was supporting as well as a lot of student voice. Needing to have more student voice, needing to have more student leadership involved, so that there can be accountability from all parts of the community. We've just been brainstorming how to support, and looking at the data, it was really amazing to see the

amount of restorative process that was already happening in response to a lot of the incidents. And that came through with the students as well.

Jess Nordquist:

They felt like a lot of the restorative pieces were already happening at GCCS. It just wasn't formalized. So obviously the goal was to have them, and us, have a new code of conduct kind of to present in the next a couple of months. But that work is going to be a bit slower. And the students being in this space, they are grieving the loss of a lot of their sixth grade year. We're kind of taking them in a different route where we're allowing them to look at how restorative supports communities when crisis happens. And allowing them to give some bullet points or some major feedback around where they would like to see things go with the discipline code of conduct. But, we're going to keep working on it and hopefully still have something to show you in June, but it probably won't be to the extent that we thought. Nolica, did I miss anything? Shannon?

Nolica Murray-Fields:

No, I think you covered it all.

Shannon Hillman:

Great. Thank you, Jess.

Michele Hannagan:

I know, what a bummer for the sixth grade. I know they were so excited to present to us, gosh, I would really wish we could have made that happen.

Jess Nordquist:

I think we're still trying to figure it out. It might still happen, but just...

Michele Hannagan:

I hope so, I hope so. It would be one way, I keep thinking, how can we, I think about the seniors and I think about the sixth graders and how can we somehow ritualize or honor this passage for them? This is a significant big deal. Sixth grade year.

Nolica Murray-Fields:

I think that the work that they've done already is so amazing. From, I mean, based on when we went in just before school was closed, they had shared so much good information around restorative practices and what it would look like in the code of conduct. And they really pull the essence of what was going on at the four different schools. So they have done a tremendous amount of work thus far. And I think the feedback, even where they are now will be very important to take into consideration when we are developing a code of conduct. If, unfortunately, they aren't here to be with us when we do it, I think the groundwork is amazing for what they've done already.

Michele Hannagan:

I really do hope that whatever can get pulled together is a way of seeing them in some capacity, you know? I don't know. I have all these thoughts going through my head about, I think we want to incorporate it, we also want them, I think they wanted to come before us. So, also that we're seeing

them and really giving them the kudos and the and listening. So I look forward to hearing about what we're going to do with that.

Michelle Burack:

If I can just make one tiny comment as the parent of a sixth grader, and this kind of was popping up earlier also when Shannon was talking, so I just want to put it out there that there's a balance between gratitude, and I know some of the discussions that we had and the family support phone call about what we might be doing for the better world day, focusing on expressing gratitude for all the people that are keeping the world running right now. And Poppy shared with me some of that discussion, but I'm wondering if also, at least for sixth grade and maybe as a school wide community, we really need to do some community-wide grieving together. Naming it, and what things can we do to put the grief on the table? Because I know Poppy is, sorry, she's grieving a lot and I'm doing what I can, but I feel like it's maybe getting swept under the rug a little bit. Or the balance between gratitude, which is real, and griefs. We just may want to do a little bit more explicit discussion of that grief, too.

Jess Nordquist:

Yeah. And we had that same conversation, Michelle. In the discipline meeting, about really being grateful and appreciating all the work they'd done, but then definitely making space for there to be some restorative work around their own grief. And so I know Lauren, and Alexis, and Chris, are really going to be looking at how they can be facilitating their learning, but now shifting the learning to how do we support each other in this space of sadness?

Nolica Murray-Fields:

Sorry, Jess. We even talked about seeing that, traditionally you start a little bit earlier, allowing for some of the sixth graders to have the opportunity to come back to the school. And do some stuff around that. Some closure. You don't make it back in June, maybe they could do it in August.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah. Any other comments? Shannon, anything you want to add before we move on?

Shannon Hillman:

No, I think it's a real conversation that we are having, and have not sound definite solutions yet.

Michele Hannagan:

We could spend this entire board meeting, quite honestly, talking about what amazing things you've done, and the grief associated with the loss that the kids are experiencing, the teachers. So I just feel strongly about that, and yet we got all this business we have to get through, right? So let's keep moving, moving through that. So, thank you Michelle. Thank you Jess. Thank you, Nolica. So, next is nominating. So Ann Marie's not here, I didn't know if there was anyone else on the committee who was prepared to speak out. Otherwise, we can hold on whatever Anne Marie might've been talking about. We do however, need to put forward nominations for officers. That's the process. We would do this at this meeting, and then at the May meeting we would vote. Because again, the June meeting is short. So I'm just-Oh, Jess?

Jess Nordquist:

Shannon and I can give a quick update, I think, on Nominating.

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah. I think our update really was that we wanted to name the openings that we have for next year, for the board, or really for the end of this year. So, as we had stated that Rebecca Boyle had resigned her position, so that's an open seat right now. And then, am I right that the only person that was up, I'm not sure if I'm right about that, that the only person that was up for the end of the year was Marcia? Is that right?

Jess Nordquist:

Yeah, I think so.

Shannon Hillman:

Yes. And Marcia has shared some sad news, but we are so grateful. Go ahead Marcia.

Marcia Joy:

I'm trying to unmute myself. Can you hear me?

Shannon Hillman:

Yep, yep.

Marcia Joy:

I did do it. Okay. I have decided that we're moving, and it's going to be a long ways away, and I really need to be available for my family and stuff. So, I am going to resign. I have loved every minute that I have been a part of the charter school. It was a dream of mine from the very beginning. And I just feel like I've been so blessed, and I'm sorry I get teary-eyed when I think about it. But I have loved it, but I am going to step down. I've done 20 years, so I think it's time for a little new blood. So as of June I will be not on the board anymore.

Michele Hannagan:

Well, I'm going to say my 2 cents as the board president, and working with you on the personnel committee, I just have deep, deep gratitude. Just bowing to you, Marsha, for your years of dedication, your experience, your heart that you've brought to this school. I mean, we wouldn't be who we are without your contributions. Truly. So deep thanks, and you are, you have earned your retirement.

Marcia Joy:

Thank you.

Shannon Hillman:

Thank you. Thanks Marcia for having that moment. We are just so, so grateful and we know where to find you. Mark, your 2 cents.

Mark Schiesser:

Yeah. Thanks. Thank you very much. Marcia, you have been a part of the board, obviously since I've been a part of the board. I'm afraid that this may make me, I'm thinking, I think I might be the senior member at this point, which is terrifying to me. So thank you very much. You have been a really amazing perspective on the board and really have helped to shape the school what it is. It's really, those are my words.

Marcia:

Thank you. And it's not being, it's not bad being the longest running member either.

Shannon Hillman:

So that means that we have two open seats for next year, and then we also have two parent reps leaving us as well. So we have four positions that are open for next year. So the nominating committee is going to be working on that. We've already had some ideas about who we could bring on. We already have a parent that's interested. I think that we're still making headway, even though we are apart. Do you want to say anything more, Jess?

Jess Nordquist:

No, I was just going to say too, we have a meeting tomorrow with Deb Hammer to also work on the onboarding document she's working on, and some other things. So there's some good work happening there. And Marcia, we're going to miss you so much. I won't be there either. So maybe we could just meet up on a Thursday or a Wednesday night for coffee or something.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah. And I just want to say, I will miss Michelle and Jess. I will miss both of you. You have really helped propel this board, in a wonderful direction. You know, the energy, and the enthusiasm, and questions where we dig deep and it's been great, great serving with you. As a former parent, and parent to parent, just thank you so much.

Jess Nordquist:

Yeah, thank you. It's been fun. I've enjoyed it.

Shannon Hillman:

I think that was our update.

Jess Nordquist:

So now do we need to do some officer?

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah, we do. I'm just going to open the floor, as we are supposed to do, and people can nominate from the floor for officers for next year. You can self-nominate, I believe. George, tell me if I'm wrong in any of this, but people can self-nominate, and anyone can offer a nomination from the Zoom floor.

George DesMarteau:

That's correct. And Mark, from my perspective, you're still just a young whipper snapper.

Mark Schiesser:

So great. I would like to nominate Michele Hannagan as the President of the board.

Michelle Burack:

I offer to provide documents and any handholding necessary to anyone who wants to self-nominate, or volunteer for the glorious role of Secretary.

Michele Hannagan:

I nominate Kevin as treasurer of the board.

Mark Schiesser:

I guess really the question on the Secretary, it's always, it's such a burden. The question really is, Michelle, would you be willing to do it again this coming year? That's really, I think,

Michelle Burack:

I can't, I won't be on the board anymore.

Mark:

Oh.

Michelle Burack:

I can't, I won't be on the board anymore. My stint as a parent is over.

Mark Schiesser:

Okay.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah, we will have a vacancy position for sure.

Michelle Burack:

Yeah. I would be happy to serve in the capacity, if my skills were otherwise felt to be relevant for ongoing membership in the board as a community member. But I don't know whether, just I'm not the greatest secretary. I'm not a very timely secretary. I type fast during the meeting, but editing takes me a long time.

Michele Hannagan:

I'd like to nominate Nolica as secretary. I didn't ask you, but you can decline, but I'm going to put it out there.

Nolica Murray-Fields:

That is not my strong suit, so I should be honest right up front, that is not the position for me.

Michele Hannagan:

Fair enough.

Jess Nordquist:

We can nominate, I nominate Ann Marie for vice president.

Mark Schiesser:

Do these have to be seconded?

George DesMarteau:

No.

Michelle Burack:

I promise I will help whoever volunteers. It's not that bad, I swear. I can give you lots of shortcuts.

Mark Schiesser:

Yeah. So the question is, is there somebody willing? And I would have to say, in terms of strong and weak suits, I would be happy to try to do it. But I, this isn't, that is 100% not me. You will not be happy with the product.

Allison Schultes:

I'm happy to give it a shot, if our messy people can. My only question is, with everything, so up in the, like I'm just wondering about my availability. And I don't want to mess anything up, if I can't be there for some reason. Is there like a backup plan or?

George DesMarteau:

I should note that the secretary is kind of responsible for the minutes, but there's no real rule that the secretary has to be the scribe, the scribe of the minutes. Somebody else could certainly take them. It's the Secretary's responsibility to maintain the records. I mean in a technical sense, but not necessarily to actually do the transcription. It's been that way, but it isn't necessarily so.

Michele Hannagan:

I'll nominate Allison unless you want to consider this as self nomination.

Allison Schultes:

Just, more like a tossing it out there that I tend to take notes anyways. So, could be of use.

Elizabeth Pietrzykowski:

I could be your understudy.

Mark Schiesser:

Well thank you. Thanks for offering that. I think the board, we ought to jump on that and take that opportunity if Alison is willing to do that. So I,

Michele Hannagan:

I wrote it down, so great.

Allison Schultes:

I'm happy to. Michelle, I will definitely need your guidance.

Marcia Joy:

I think that it's great. And for Alison, and I want to tell Michelle Breck, that I think you've been absolutely fabulous and I know it's not an easy job to do. But I feel like you've kept us so well-informed and I really, really appreciate that.

Michele Hannagan:

Amen to that. Other nominations? So I'll just read back. Michelle Hannigan for president, Alison secretary. I did hear Elizabeth say she'd be back up, even though you don't, when there's not a backup roll. We're going to, we're going to put you in the backup. You get to wear a headset and everything.

Allison Schultes:

I know where to find her, so that's always good.

Elizabeth Pietrzykowski:

I can be the one that's available.

Michele Hannagan:

Kevin for treasurer, and Ann Marie for vice president. And my understanding, George, people can make nominations kind of fluidly until the next meeting? Or does it have to actually happen during the meeting?

George DesMarteau:

Well the nomination technically would happen during a meeting, doesn't have to be this meeting, and then they kind of remain open until you close the nominations and proceed to the vote.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. Then we've got, our slate and we'll put those forward at the next meeting for vote. Okay. I am sorry we are over on time, but we really do have to get through the rest of this stuff here, including the personnel committee, the staff handbook approval. So that was sent out in advance, and we talked about this last month, the honing in on the key areas that were adjusted, or changed, or recommendations from the HR group that we've been, Shannon's been working with, we've been working with. And Shannon, is there anything high level you want to talk about?

Shannon Hillman:

Only that, as you probably saw in the revisions, there were very few. But we were tweaking the language, especially around our absence policy, and our maternity, well our family, what did we call it? Parental. Parental Leave. And wanting to really be clear about, for our employees, but also take care of our employees. So just a little backstory that the one,

Shannon Hillman:

Just a little backstory that the leave was not super clear in its language as far as the fact of when you can start your leave and in the Family Medical Leave Act, you can identify your leave when you want to identify your leave. So, it doesn't have to be at the moment of birth or the moment of adoption. It can be a named time and then you take it from there and that was not clear in there. So, we made that clear that the person who is going out on leave does not have to do it right at that sort of qualifying event moment, which allows a little bit more flexibility. A lot more flexibility, but then we did say that we want people to take their leave consecutively after that, because that's what's best for the kids and their team rather than taking like small chunks of time off.

Michele Hannagan:

So, I'm just going to step in, just in the interest of time, to say we did send it out. We did talk about it. Unless anyone has anything they need to discuss or ask questions about, I am going to ask for a motion to approve the staff handbook.

Michelle Burack:

I'll move.

Shannon Hillman:

Sorry, [inaudible 02:01:19] .

Michele Hannagan:

All right. Michelle has moved.

Nolica Murray-Fields:

I'll second it.

Michele Hannagan:

Nolica has seconded. All those in favor of approving the revisions in the staff handbook for next year. Please say aye.

All:

Aye.

Michele Hannagan:

Opposed? Abstentions. All right, we're good with that. Shannon, you've got vacancies and recruitment. Can you do that in a minute?

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah. Well, we don't really have vacancies right now. The announcement that I made in the last meeting is a little bit more hesitant now. So, we don't necessarily have teacher vacancies but we are interviewing right now. We are interviewing this week and we have some great candidates. So, if there is a vacancy we are feeling already very confident that we will have some candidates to bring forward. We are also interviewing for our restorative practice coach position, even though that's not a definite, but we

wanted to start those interviews and we have really great candidates for that position as well. So, we are feeling like we're in a good place and as much as all those recruitment days didn't happen, we still got resumes from the people who were interested in those positions. So, it wasn't all for not, I guess. So, that's my summary.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. All right. So, we do have to talk about budget updates. This is pretty critical given the economic reality with the COVID 19. So, I'm going to turn it over to Kevin, and I know Shannon, you're going to speak to this a little bit too. So, where we're at.

Shannon Hillman:

And Kevin-

Kevin:

I'm actually going to have speak on it first because we didn't review it yet.

Shannon Hillman:

So, yes, the finance committee was put a little bit on hold. I'm sorry, just give me a moment as I'm trying to pull up the slide. Okay, because one of the things that we found out that is a definite, and actually, I think it's a 5.5, I think that was an error, all New York state schools are going to face a 5.5% reduction in state education funding and that is based on what they were supposed to receive for this coming year. So, it's not based on this current year. It's based on what we were projected to get next year, which was like a projection of about 3% increase. And so, 5.5 is like not great, but it's not as bad when you think about the fact that we were supposed to increase a bit. And so, with that information that we didn't quite have when we met as a finance committee, we wanted to have more information before we moved forward with a draft budget for the committee to look over.

Shannon Hillman:

We also had a webinar with New York Charter Schools Institute and it was finance manager who gave us some great tips to consider. So, this is a bulleted list of things that we are considering right now, with one thing that we need to put forth in motion and that's what's in blue over here. So, schools. We did find out that through the \$2 trillion Cares Act, there is supposed to be a boost in title one funding to all schools. It's based on the number of students that we have that qualify for free and reduced lunch currently. And so, we don't know exactly what that number is going to be. I don't think it's going to be super large, but it is something, it is a boost. The other big piece that we got from the webinar was this is our rainy day. What is happening right now is our rainy day and if we have a rainy day fund or we have reserves, we should really be considering tapping into them more and that, that will be very much allowed this year coming up.

Shannon Hillman:

So, one thing that I would like us to talk about, Robin and Kevin and I and the finance committee is approving a particular percentage of reserves that you are willing to let us kind of go to if we need to, to balance the budget, excuse me, and as you know, often we pull about 40 thousands, or give or take, each year. And so we would need a bit more and we'll explain that. And then the other suggestion that they had for our budget is to create a COVID 19 expense line for un-incurred expense, just possibilities of what could happen.

Robin Blew:

Contingency type line.

Shannon Hillman:

Thank you. A contingency line just in case. Okay. So, to be a little bit more specific, when you look at our revenue from this year per pupil, and our projected revenue for next year per pupil. And then also to be more specific, what we did is we have approximately 180 students that are RCSD students and we have approximately 35 additional students that are from the suburbs and all different suburbs. So, we took the estimated per pupil for our CSC and then we calculated it times 180, and then we took the median of all the different suburbs that we represent and we took the median per pupil allocation because each district is different, and then we calculated that times 35. And then that we came up with our revenue that is 92,000 less than this year's current budget. So, I hope that makes sense. That's what we need to make up, is that 92,000 approximately. So, these are the considerations that we're making right now. The advisement from the state is to freeze salaries and to budget flat, and we can't exactly budget flat because we are going to be in a deficit.

Shannon Hillman:

We're going to be less than what we were expecting. However, they also said that we should consider giving out bonuses if, throughout the year, it's projected that we're going to have a surplus. And so maybe those bonuses come out in the winter or spring depending on where we kind of feel like we are safe and ready to do that. So, teachers who are in this meeting, do not get excited yet. This would just be a possibility of what could happen. We highly, highly doubt that it would be a good idea to go on any overnight field studies next year because of what's happening and because there will likely be more travel restrictions. That'll save us about \$34,000 if we freeze sabbaticals for next year, and that will save us about 15,000 in sub money. And then if we advise the staff not to do any travel for professional development, especially planes.

Shannon Hillman:

So, no flying, if you're going to go somewhere you would drive and it's likely that professional development will be offered virtually next year anyway. We will save about \$20,000 in the travel related expenses. So, I'm not saying that we're cutting our EL contract at all, or cutting the opportunities that we have for institutes. It would just be in the travel related expenses. So, those are sort of natural savings just from the climate of what's happening right now. And then we are still in a conversation with EL about having a contribution for our teacher on special assignment. So, that would be revenue coming in just like it was this year. And then, as I had said earlier in the meeting, that we would prepay some of our expenses. Things that we just know we would be spending our money on in the fall and do that now with the savings that we have currently. So, those are the bullets that I have. I did see that Becky raised her hand.

Rebecca Mason:

Yeah. I only just raised my hand because as a teacher of being fifth grade next year, it makes me worried to just cut out all field studies, overnight field studies, especially for those when they've missed out on Boston and then they're not going to go on the fifth grade one, and same with the sixth graders. That just worries me a little bit to make that one of the... I mean obviously if there's still travel bands and things like that, but I'm just thinking of those kids and how really hard that would be for them.

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah, these are super, super hard decisions, and I think based on what we are hearing, and there's many healthcare workers on this meeting, it sounds like this is our reality for the next year. And so I think it's likely that we'll be saving in that no matter what. So, Lisa's kind of started to do that, the financial look at that. Nothing is set in stone yet.

Rebecca Mason:

I was surprised. Okay.

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah. Kevin or finance committee, any other comments that you wanted to make?

Kevin Sutherland:

Just one, I wanted to thank you for setting up the meetings so that we can finish the accounting policy, which will be ready for next board meeting.

Robin Blew:

The thing that I wanted to mention too is with the teacher on special assignment money that we never know exactly what EL may pay, that Shannon and I were talking earlier and we might have a little bit of a cushion in the teacher salaries that might be able to absorb some of that. So, we do have some wiggle room there if they don't come back with as much like they did last year.

Michele Hannagan:

So, Shannon, I know you and I talked a little bit and kind of to prep for tonight's meeting and I know you've still got to have some more discussions, kind of iron some of this out. And I agree, we talked about this, I agree about the, as a former parent, the devastation about field studies and I also think anything that we can do to be as fiscally responsible as we can, not particularly safe positions, that's, to me, that would be beyond devastating to have to look at cuts of positions that we think are crucial. So, what is the next step for the finance committee in terms of getting feedback and that you would be bringing back to the board for further specific?

Shannon Hillman:

So, the Finance committee is meeting, is it next week or the week... It's soon.

Robin Blew:

The 22nd.

Shannon Hillman:

Thank you. So, now that we have the right information, I think we're ready to go ahead and start really as seeing the reality of this and what Robin and I have started to kind of crunch numbers to see where we are. So, going back to the reserves piece, we think that we would need 3.5% of our total revenue set for reserves or less based on numbers. And so, one of the things that we wanted to bring forward was, and ask for an approval to like a certain threshold of percentage of reserves to use for next year as part of our rainy day fund, but I also see that Jess has her hand raised.

Jess Nordquist:

I was just wondering if we look at those reserves, we could maybe say like, yes/no overnight field studies. However, if travel bans were lifted or something like that, then there could be a use of reserve funds possibly for even just one class or sixth grade for their four cities, or fifth grade. As per what is most essential for their curriculum for that year. Just a thought that, yes, we say blanket no, but with a caveat that if there was an opportunity to travel, maybe we would re-look at that when the time came.

Mark Schiesser:

If I understand what you're asking for, you're saying, can we carve out a chunk of money to put in the budget so that we can sort of hold the budget harmless, and I think if that is what you're saying, my suggestion would be it doesn't make that much sense to me right now for the board to just approve a big chunk of money. What makes sense to me is to have you put together your budget and say, "This is how much I need." In other words, put together your budget. This is how I want to run the school, and we have X amount of dollars that we have to make up for. It's 92,000 or it's 75,000 we got to take out of reserves. Run the school the way that you ought to and make a budget. And then, come back to the board with a number so that we're not sort of arbitrarily carving out a chunk. I'm actually saying make a budget, and then hit us with that. Does that make sense?

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah. I got to say, I agree with you, Mark, because I'm thinking that in alignment with what Jess is saying is I don't want to say no to something and then say, "Oh, we should have considered it." I just completely did out of what Mark said. What would you like to do? Put it forward and then let's look at the ask in real dollars and cents, or as real as we can see the dollars and cents based on the projections. That's my-

Kevin Sutherland:

That makes good sense, and it sounds like the way to do it. What I also like, this is Kevin, like to do is if we could do a projection for how we're going to end up this year. My main question is about the tuition and if we're at 89% are we going to get hit with an adjustment at the end of the year because we're usually at 97%?

Shannon Hillman:

No, Nope. That we will not get hit. We are under that 180 day executive orders. So, we won't get hit with any kind of penalty in funding right now. Actually we're already like getting payments from schools still. So, that should not be a worry that attendance is not the at seat time attendance. It's attendance to sort of the accountability of the learning plan that we're putting out. So, it's different. It's not apples to apples.

Kevin Sutherland:

Okay.

Shannon Hillman:

But I yes I think we could definitely do a projection as far as how much of a surplus we're going to have, and I think next we will really have a good real idea as to kind of where we are. Don't you think so, Robin?

Robin Blew:

I agree, and I think the main thing that we were just concerned about is that usually there's around 40 to 50 sometimes, I don't think we've ever gotten more than 50, to balance the budget with so many reserve funds. However, with this new rule that we just found out about with that contingency line, we have to account for that plus and then with the reduction in the revenue, and even though we're going to try to save us some of those line items, we've already tweaked some of those numbers with those things being lower, our ask is still going to probably be around 60 on top of the 40 that we were originally planning to ask on our preliminary budget. I'm crunching there that we did before COVID. So, I think that it was just kind of, it's hard for us to really tweak all these numbers because we really need a lot more money this year than we've asked for in prior years to balance.

Robin Blew:

So, I think that was kind of why Shannon and I thought that it was best to kind of give you guys a heads up about this, because it is going to be more significant this year.

Mark Schiesser:

Right, and I think the thing that I was trying to say, and I think we don't necessarily have to do a motion. The idea is the sense of the board is probably going to be to take care of what your needs are. And so, maybe put together a budget that takes care of your needs, not feeling like, "Oh my God, we can't throw this out there and we can't throw that out there." Run the school, make it run well and, and then present that to the board. I'm going to say, for my part, obviously, we have these reserved funds for rainy day. This is the time to use them. And so, I would say don't be bashful, obviously, within reason.

Shannon Hillman:

Right, right. Of course. George, you wanted to say something, I think.

George DesMarteau:

Well, I was just going to hop on what Mark had said and I agree that, that's the approach. This discussion would be, this is what we're looking to do, is there any reason to think the board would have a lot of pushback? I know I wouldn't anticipate that, but I think Mark's stated it exactly correctly. It's up to you to put together the budget and come forward with it, and unless there's some consensus on the board that, that's not something we want done, then I would think this is the way to go. Also point out that if you get into the course of the year and it turns out that there are some things that you want to do that freeing up some additional money might be necessary. It's not impossible to go back and revise the budget. What you're trying to come up with now is a projected budget. Balanced budget going into next year, you have the ability to do some midyear tweaking as necessary.

Shannon Hillman:

Yes, and that was something said to us that there's going to be a lot more flexibility next year in being able to revise our budgets throughout the year. So, yes, this would be projected if we were moving in the direction that we're moving right now, and then we could certainly adjust up or down. So-

Michele Hannagan:

I'm just going to jump in and ask, is there anybody who's opposed to this course of action that we're asking Shannon to go and work on this? I'm seeing heads shaking. Shannon, do you have what you need to move forward?

Shannon Hillman:

I think so. It sounds like I have the faith [crosstalk 02:21:18].

Michele Hannagan:

You have the faith of your board.

Shannon Hillman:

I do see a hand though from Michelle.

Michelle Burack:

Because my understanding is the forecast that you're looking at right now does not include the hire of the restorative practices coach that we had been talking about.

Shannon Hillman:

No, that's not exactly true.

Michelle Burack:

Okay.

Shannon Hillman:

What Robin was talking about with that cushion and salaries, we actually think that we might be able to still get that in within the cushion, which was like a surprise yay, because to me, and I thank you for saying that Michele and sorry Michele Hannagan, but I think it's really important that everyone hear me right now that I think that is probably now a major need, especially with knowing how we have to bring these kids back and help them. So, to me, it's almost like a non-negotiable,

Michele Hannagan:

Right back to Mark's point, you tell us what you need and you will have our support. Our job is to make sure you take care of the students and there's no question in my mind that is going to be a huge need going forward. Anything-

Robin Blew:

The title money might help that too.

Shannon Hillman:

Yes.

Robin Blew:

The extra title money might actually help that as well.

Shannon Hillman:

Okay, thank you.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. Going to move us along then. So I think Jess mentioned about the work with Breakthrough. Breakthrough is going to be working on the onboarding. Is there anything else [inaudible 02:22:48]?

Shannon Hillman:

Sorry.

Michele Hannagan:

Anything else to add with regard to the breakthrough point?

Shannon Hillman:

Just that Deb is meeting with us behind the scenes. Yay. So, she's still doing her work and she's doing even more for us because we are closed. So, we'll bring more in May to some of the things that she's up to.

Michele Hannagan:

All right. Shannon, update the charter renewal process.

Shannon Hillman:

Well it's quick and easy honestly. So, we've been pushed to the May meeting and that's too bad. But all of the schools got pushed to the May meetings. So, we're not alone. They haven't given us a recommendation yet just as they said they were going to wait until the end of April or right before the meeting happens. So, we do not know yet but the report is in the drive for you to view if you would like, as well as our response. They took a lot of the feedback that we put forth earlier in the year. And so we were very grateful for that. Our ratings did not change. We were saddened to understand that. So, that's the overall summary and we will know the next meeting, I'm guessing. That's my summary.

Michele Hannagan:

Well, I just want to give a huge, huge shout out to Shannon for her leadership during this process. The phone calls that you have had with me as well as with Susan, David, the way that you've been networking and working with all the folks on the board that you've needed to just amazing. So, really three chairs and just thank you for your leadership in this. It's been hard and I really mean that.

Shannon Hillman:

Thank you. it has been really, really hard in the midst of all of this also going on. I will say that Wade Norwood did reach out to us and wanted to know how we were doing. So, I tutored our horn and he was really glad that that things are going so well. So, it was great to know that we have someone who's looking out for us.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah. All right. Any other questions for Shannon about that process?

Michele Hannagan:

We can't really forecast whether the ratings that remained lower than we felt like were reflective of our performance are going to necessarily mean a three year rather than five-year. It's still compatible with a five year.

Shannon Hillman:

It's because it's three approaches, I'm not sure how they're going to take that. When you interpret their beginning description of what equates a five-year, it looks like substantially meeting all of the performance benchmarks, but they do weight each benchmark differently. And our number one, the test scores was rated as meats and Susan shared in an email that they aren't giving out exceeds anymore, which was not clear to us. So, looks like we're where we need to be for that benchmark and I know that that has a lot more weight. It also looks like they really recognized our good faith efforts. So, we'll just have to see, and I mean I hope that they take into consideration the large results that we are getting right now for our lottery. So, that was in our response as well. So, we'll just hope for the best.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. And then I'll open it up now for any public comment, and I want to let you know, Shannon, if Ann Marie was on the call, I think she would have said this, but the board has drafted a letter that we would like to send out and thanks to you and the entire staff for the amazing outstanding job you have done during this pandemic crisis. And so, you will be seeing that coming your way. We would love to have been able to sign it all officially, but can't do that in the current situation. So, I want to thank Maureen for her assistance and working with Ann Marie and I to get that done and all the board members contributing their support of you via email that Anne Marie and I have been doing. So, take a look for that. I'll send that out to you or Anne Marie will.

Shannon Hillman:

Wow. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Michele Hannagan:

You're very welcome.

Shannon Hillman:

I do feel the love even though we're far away.

Michele Hannagan:

Awesome. All right. Then I don't think there's any actions or agreements to review. So, with that, I make a motion to adjourn the meeting. Michelle Burack has seconded. All those in favor?

All:

Aye.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. Opposed? Abstentions? Everyone. Thank you so much for hanging in there on the call. I know we went longer. Stay safe, healthy, and we'll see you soon.

All:

Bye, everybody. Bye.

Michele Hannagan:

Shannon, we have to do anything with the recording or you got that?

Shannon Hillman:

I'm stopping now.

PART 5 OF 5 ENDS [02:28:33]