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Michele Hannagan:

The school board of trustees meeting is to order. And Annemarie says, "Okay, great." So, that's great. Welcome, everybody. I hope that everybody is faring well, as well as can be expected, particularly thinking of teachers and parents, all the staff, and, of course, Shannon at school. So, with that, Shannon, you want to get us started with... And the folks from Heveron, they are going to join-

Shannon Hillman:

Melinda's here from Heveron.

Michele Hannagan:

Oh, there she is. Okay. It's like, you've got to look through all the squares and... Hi, Melinda.

Melinda Perez:

Hi, good evening.

Michele Hannagan:

Good evening. All right. So, Shannon, do you want to start us with the greeting?

Shannon Hillman:

Yep. I'm going to do a really quick one, or at least it's going to try to be quick. The question is, "How are you?" We have been talking as a staff, actually it was in August, that we thought about the importance of asking ourselves quite frequently, "How are the children?" So, sometimes the children can just mean you, too. So, you can answer with just you or the children, but you're actually going to do it in a brief way in the chat box. So, instead of having everyone share verbally, we're just going to see your response in the chat box. If you can't access it, you just go down to the bar at the very bottom of your Zoom screen and click chat, and it should pop up. And then you can write to all of us about how you're doing. We'll just take another minute or so to do that.

Mark Schiesser:

Mark is driving. So, he's not going to chat, but Mark is well.

Shannon Hillman:

Thank you, Mark.

Shannon Hillman:

All right, we're getting some great answers. If you haven't had a chance to read them, take a moment. Annemarie, I know you've just joined us. We're writing in the chat box how you're doing, and it's just a brief statement for yourself.

Michele Hannagan:

Drinking from a fire hose. I'm going to adopt that one.

Shannon Hillman:

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All right.

Michele Hannagan:

Thank you, everyone.

Shannon Hillman:

Thank you. Good evening. Good to see you all.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah. Oh, George, all I can say is amen. Amen, brother. All right. Thank you so much, everybody. And so, we're going to go into approving the September minutes, and actually, I did have one edit when I reviewed them that I think won't be an issue, and that is in the motion, this is about the lease and the additional \$500, 200,909.10. I think we should have the motion reflect that it's \$500 a month. I think it just says the board approves the additional \$500, but I think it should reflect \$500 per month, since that was the request.

Michele Hannagan:

Anything else anyone noted about the minutes? All right, then I'm going to make a motion to approve the September minutes from 22nd.

Annemarie Wess:

I'll second.

Michele Hannagan:

That's Annemarie. All those in favor, please say, or give thumbs up, aye? Opposed? Any abstentions? Mark, you're lighting up, are you abstaining?

Shannon Hillman:

He was muted.

Mark Schiesser:

I'm sorry. I'm having some difficulty.

Michele Hannagan:

All right. So, just for the record then, do we have, because I don't see Ivelisse, Ivelisse and Mark are not on camera. So, did you vote to approve or...

Mark Schiesser:

Sorry. I was having-

Ivelisse Gonzalez:

I'm not voting, [inaudible 00:05:15].

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Michele Hannagan:

Oh, right.

Mark Schiesser:

Mark is driving, so he's trying to avoid touching the computer, but in any case, I approve.

Michele Hannagan:

Great. And thank you, Ivelisse, for that reminder. Okay. Motion passes. Minutes are approved. Okay. So, tonight, as we typically do on October, we're happy to welcome Heveron and Heveron, Melinda Perez, who's been with us many times before to present to the board for review and approval, the audit summary from 2019-2020. So, with that, I'm going to... So, we put 20 minutes on the agenda, Melinda, is that fair?

Melinda Perez:

I think that's plenty. It might even be a little more. It depends on how many question the board members have after I go through info.

Michele Hannagan:

So, Annemarie, my fearless co-leader, keep us good with time. And why don't we just give me a note when we're at the, let's say the 10 minute mark, and we'll just kind of check in. So, Melinda, the floor is yours.

Melinda Perez:

Okay, thank you. I sent an audit summary that everyone should have received, which is the info I'm going to be going through. And previous to this, everyone should have received a draft copy of our financial statements to look through and our management letter this year. But I will be focusing on the audit summary report that we sent.

Melinda Perez:

So, some information that we kind of go over every year, so that if there's any new board members, they can kind of understand the purpose of the audit. An audit is necessary for charter schools for the New York State Department of Education to be in compliance with their rules. It's also an expectation of some funders and donors. You don't get a lot of donations, but the few you do get, you guys received a sizeable one last year, some of them will ask to see your latest audit. And so, it's a tool that you have to show where your financial aid. It also provides some information for how you can reduce your risk when it comes to financial loss or misuse of your resources. We try to reduce the risk that any embarrassment could come from losses or misuse. And we also try to help you avoid sanctions and penalties for not being in compliance with the accounting laws.

Melinda Perez:

I am going to take a side note to say, we know you had audit from New York State last year. They don't look at the same things that we look at, unfortunately. And so, we did see their results, and we've noted that you've already put into place some new policies to correct their findings. And because it was at the

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end of the year, those are things we're going to be looking at next year when we come in the audit, to make sure that the new policies that have been put in place towards the end of the year are being followed this current year. That makes sense.

Melinda Perez:

So, we do look at your internal controls and try to identify the best practices that you should be following, as far as separating duties when it comes to receiving income and paying bills, which you guys have some very good controls in place when it comes to things like that. We try to keep you informed about changes in the tax laws and the accounting laws, accounting moreso for you, less tax, since you guys are non-profit. And some new legislation that is coming down the pipeline, which we've had a few changes over the last couple of years when it comes to financial statement presentation rules that we have been implementing last year and this year, and in the upcoming years, there'll be some new rules also.

Melinda Perez:

So, we try to be a good resource for you, to give you some, in the back of this audit summary, there's a lot of links for some resources for non-profits that are useful. But our main objective is to help assure you that your processes and systems can be relied upon to help manage risk. Based on our audit procedures, we believe that your controls are fair, that they're good, and that they would help mitigate some of the risk of theft within your organization.

Melinda Perez:

So, we did complete our audit, which you should have received the draft and our audit opinion is clean, which means we believe that they're fairly stated in all material respects. You should have also received copies of any journal entries that we made, which included a small entry to roll forward your net assets and to adjust the depreciation by a small amount.

Melinda Perez:

We're also required to communicate to you any material weaknesses, which are any serious control deficiencies that could result in material inaccuracies in your financial statements. And we're also required to communicate any significant deficiencies, which are less serious, but they're still important. We did not identify any material weaknesses or significant deficiencies.

Melinda Perez:

The required communications that we did have were on the management letter that we submitted to you in the draft form. Last year's management letter, we had recommended that you implement a new procurement policy that was in line with federal guidance, and you guys did do that. We have received a copy of it. We continue to recommend from last year's letter that a physical inventory should be taken of the school on a yearly basis. It's important for insurance claims, if you needed to file one, to be able to prove what you have in the building. I know you guys started a process pre-COVID, COVID kind of disrupted everything, but we will continue to recommend that you finish that.

Melinda Perez:

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A new recommendation we had this year was we did note some invoices that were not initialed and dated by the treasurer. And it could have simply been something with COVID happening and things were getting jumbled around and all new processes were being put in place. But we did want to note that that was something we saw, just to go forward, be more cautious about making sure everything is properly initialed and dated and signed off on.

Melinda Perez:

So, in our required communications, we believe that your accounting policies, estimates, and disclosures are appropriate for your circumstances. We believe that the timeliness of record keeping is good. All accounting adjustments that we concern necessary have been recorded. We believe that your internal controls are good and management seems committed to proper systems. In your supplementary financial information, it's complete and it's consistent with how things were done previously. We did not have any disagreements with management. We did not observe any fraud or illegal acts, and we did not observe any unusual transactions or adjustments.

Melinda Perez:

Some major items that we saw this year in your financial statements were that grant receivables were down about \$81,000. Excuse me. That was mainly the result of the dissemination grant ending in the year. We noticed that your retirement expense was down, and that had a lot to do with a decrease in the percentage. You know, that goes up and down every year. And it decreased down to 8.8% this year, I think from 10% in the previous year. And also staff development costs were lower, and we believe that was probably just due to less training that happened at the end of the year because COVID shut everything down. One second here. I'm not a talker.

Melinda Perez:

So, some key financial results for the year ended, where your total net assets were approximately 2.4 million. About \$608,000 of that was in net property and equipment, and \$540,000 of that is current, which means it's all in cash and receivables and prepaid expenses. Your total liabilities were approximately \$410,000. Most of it was in payables and in accrued payroll. And that left net assets of about two million, of which a hundred thousand is board designated for your dissolution fund. Total support in revenue was 3.3 million, which was down a little bit from 3.5 in the previous year. And that had a lot to do with the dissolution grant and not getting extra charter school aid, that is kind of coming down through the years. Your total expenses were 3.3 million, which was also down from the previous year of 3.4. And your change in that assets was a loss of just over \$5,000.

Melinda Perez:

Your school, if there's not any extra charter school aid, you tend to have a pretty breakeven level with your income and expenses, because you're a mature school, so that's reasonable for the age of your school. Your cash from operations was \$104,000, and that's the difference when you add back non-cash items such as depreciation in investment changes.

Melinda Perez:

So, we look at some benchmarks when we look at how your organization is doing compared to other organizations, other charter schools in the area. Your program expenses, as a percentage of total

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expenses, were 87% this year, which is up a little bit from last year at 85%, and the industry standard is 80%, so you spend more on programs than the industry standard does. And that means in management in general, you're spending at about 13%, which is less than the industry standard of 20%.

Melinda Perez:

Your current ratio, which is your current assets and current liabilities, a lot of people look at this to show your ability to pay your bills, is 1.3 to one, and standard is one-to-one. That's what most people like to see. So you're better than the standard. Your salaries and benefits as a percentage of total expenses with 75.3%, which is exactly the same as last year, 75.3%. And your payroll overhead is 30.5% this year, down a little bit from last year. And that's because of that change in the retirement percentage that we spoke about.

Melinda Perez:

Some highlights in your financial statements in your footnotes. There were some new disclosures this year that are because of some changes in the law. One of them is from something called contracts with customers and exchange transactions. And what it does is it more clearly lays out how you earn your revenue, which for you, would be your tuition, such as the timing of when it's considered earned. And there's also a new footnote about contributions received, which more clearly defines conditional, unconditional restricted contributions. Your cash and cash equivalents are defined in note four. You had just under \$300,000 in checking at your end. And you'll note that the footnote also includes restricted cash now, which I believe we made that change for your organization last year. We had two years to do it, either last year or this year. And I believe we did it for yours last year.

Melinda Perez:

Your investments are described in note seven, which is on page 17. Your investments were just over a million dollars at the end of the year, which was up from \$1,016,000 in the previous year. And you're split between equity and bond mutual funds. And as we noted earlier, the teacher's retirement system pension costs did decrease, because the rate went from 8.86% this year, which was down from 10.62%. And so, the contribution expense was \$154,000.

Melinda Perez:

I was the manager on the job this year, and Jean, who I believe many of you know, was the partner on the job. And our contact information is there, if anybody has any questions not answered tonight. But that is the summary that we have. And then there's some links, as I'd said earlier, about some non-profit things and some comments about some things coming up on the horizon, such as within the next couple of years, there's going to be some changes about how your leases are going to be presented on your financial statements. Unfortunately, they're going to have to be put on there as a liability. And I'm not sure, I don't think there's anything else coming up that's really going to affect you guys very much, but that is a big one coming up. So, did anyone have any questions from their review of the financial statements?

Michele Hannagan:

Melinda, could you just say a little bit more about that lease, about what you said, the last part, just again for my benefit, and also any new board members, and we've got about-

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Melinda Perez:

Yes. So, currently, when you have a lease, basically as you pay it, it's considered rent expense, is how that works. Beginning for years ended, it was after December of 2020, it's been pushed out to December 2021. So, this won't be until your June 2022. Excuse me. No, 2023. For you, it'll be June 2023, so it is a few years down the road. What it says is basically your lease is the entire value of it. So, you have to say, if your lease is a five-year lease, you have to add up all of the payments for five years, and you book both an asset and a liability on your balance sheet. The asset is considered, they call it a right of use, which means you now have the rights to use this place for five years.

Melinda Perez:

And you also have a liability saying for five years, you have to pay this amount over the next five years. And then, as the years go by and you pay the rent, they both go down, the liability goes down as you pay it. And the asset will go down and get moved to the expense line as rent expense still.

Michele Hannagan:

Thank you. So, you had used the word, unfortunately, so I wasn't sure if there was some downstream negative impact that we needed to be thinking about now in preparation for that change.

Melinda Perez:

So, the negative impact, and I don't believe it will be so much for you, is for organizations that are looking to obtain loans, it messes with their debt ratios, and it can create problems for organizations. We're hoping that maybe banks and such like that will look at that and say back out amounts due for leases, right? They'll come up with some new calculation to remove that. But as it stands right now, with the calculation for that, it could make obtaining loans more difficult.

Michele Hannagan:

I see. Thank you. So, there's no particular direction from Heveron and Heveron at this time that we need to do anything or take some action?

Melinda Perez:

I don't believe so.

Michele Hannagan:

Thank you.

Speaker 1:

I was curious about program expenses, that ours are higher than standard. And I wondered what might cause that, and if we should consider that a positive or something to adjust.

Melinda Perez:

I think it's definitely a positive. Any time you can put more into your program, it's good. I think you have lower overhead, I think, than some schools do when it comes to administrative personnel, and your rent is very reasonable. You have very small office spaces. And so, the amounts of the building that you use

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for administrative purposes is lower. And so, all of that is taken into account when we're allocating things out. So, whereas other places might have 10% of their rent is considered administrative, you guys might be only 5%, because your office spaces are so small.

Speaker 1:

Thank you.

Melinda Perez:

You're welcome.

Michele Hannagan:

Any other questions for Melinda?

Michele Hannagan:

So, once again, on behalf of the board, Melinda, I want to thank you and thank Heveron. I think you guys continue to be really great partners with us. And at this point then, we need to entertain a motion to approve the audit, so that we can have an official copy. And then Shannon will do the uploading and make sure that New York State knows about it, so.

Melinda Perez:

Okay.

Michele Hannagan:

With that.

Melinda Perez:

And I believe we also sent you guys a copy of the 990 already, is that correct?

Michele Hannagan:

Yes, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Melinda Perez:

Okay. Just wanted to make sure. If you guys do have any questions about that also, I know it's not something we cover in the meeting, but you do have our contact information.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. And George, we don't have to approve the 990 separately, it's all part of the audit, correct? You're muted.

Shannon Hillman:

I think we do have to do it separately, but George can chime in.

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George DesMarteau:

Sorry. Yes. I was saying to nobody who could hear me, that I would approve it separately, because it's the nature of the document and the filing of the document with the IRS.

Michele Hannagan:

All right, then.

Kevin Sutherland:

And I just want to chime in, I agree too, the 990 should be approved separately and...

Michele Hannagan:

Oh, Kevin, hey, Kevin.

Kevin Sutherland:

We... Oh, I've been here. Didn't we get the updated one? We had an anonymous contribution. Okay. I haven't seen it yet.

Shannon Hillman:

Melinda, right, the revised summary that you sent out had the anonymous contribution?

Melinda Perez:

Yes, so we did send you a new one of that. And if you were going to send it to the whole board, you're going to want to make sure you pull up that one page that shows the name.

Shannon Hillman:

Okay.

Melinda Perez:

Okay.

Shannon Hillman:

Yep. Okay. So, it's possible, Kevin, that it's in my email. I tried to replace with updates in the folder, but I'll have to check that.

Kevin Sutherland:

Okay.

Michele Hannagan:

So, there's two 990s in the folder. There's an updated draft.

Shannon Hillman:

That's probably the one.

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Michele Hannagan:

Yeah. So, that is the one that we need to... I'm asking, that is the correct version that we're going to be looking to approve tonight, Kevin or Shannon? Whoever has the right answer for that.

Shannon Hillman:

I'm looking right now to see. So, the one that was uploaded last was October 12th, so that would be updated drafts, so that would be the one that we're approving.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. And you said there was an anonymous donation, and...

Melinda Perez:

It's listed on schedule B, is where the person's name is listed.

Shannon Hillman:

Okay.

Kevin Sutherland:

So, that shouldn't even be going to the whole board.

Shannon Hillman:

Well, I'm sorry about that. I just wanted to make sure that we had it so that we could approve it tonight, because it is a deadline. So...

Michele Hannagan:

All right. So, Kevin, what do we do here?

Kevin Sutherland:

Because this is due, let's see, November 15th.

Melinda Perez:

Yes.

Kevin Sutherland:

When's our next board meeting?

Michele Hannagan:

The 11th, I believe.

Kevin Sutherland:

So, I would suggest that we put it on our agenda to approve next meeting.

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Shannon Hillman:

I'm not... Is it due November 15th or the 1st? Because all of our other financials are due on the 1st November.

Kevin Sutherland:

15th. It's due the middle of the month.

Mark:

We have traditionally struggled always. Somehow, the 990 gets messed up, in terms of getting it shipped out. And we always end up with a little bit of a scramble. So, I was super happy to hear that we were going to get it done this month, and then find out, oh, no, we can't do it this month.

Michele Hannagan:

So, thank you, Annemarie, I'm conscious of the time. So, just so I'm clearly understanding, because I'm a little fuzzy on why we can't approve the 990 tonight, is it because it's posted and it shouldn't be posted?

Kevin Sutherland:

There's has been a change to our audit financials that we made just now, and I haven't seen that, and I haven't seen my 990 to make sure that they tick and tie out. If the rest of the board wants to approve it, that's fine. But I don't understand, since the next board meeting is in plenty of time to approve it and allow for a more in-depth review, why we don't push it off until we've had that chance.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah. So, I'm just really trying to understand what the issue is. I'm not opposed to pushing it to November 11. I just didn't know that I'm a little fuzzy as to why we can't approve it, but you've just explained. So, it sounds like there's been a change to the 990. Kevin, you need time to review it. Is that correct?

Kevin Sutherland:

The 990 and the audited statements.

Shannon Hillman:

So, they were all in as of October 12th when I received the updated, so it was not that it just got in there today, if that's the problem.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. But you're saying, Kevin, that you would recommend that we have more time?

Shannon Hillman:

I would. And also, like we've been talking about, I really would pull that statement off of the server and then re-upload it with that page omitted.

Michele Hannagan:

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Okay.

Maureen Milke:

Shannon, though, is it true that the audit itself, the financial statements are due to State Ed by November 1st, and then the 990 is due by 11, by November 15th.

Shannon Hillman:

I hope that's true. I'm trying to quick scramble to get confirmation, because what worries me is we won't have it in time. And then we've got to pull together an executive committee meeting. So, I'll try to scramble while we're doing the next thing and make sure that that's true.

Michele Hannagan:

Well, so, Melinda, do you know the answer to that question?

Melinda Perez:

Well, I do know that November 15th is the date that the 990 is due to the federal government. I don't know if you're required to submit it with your New York State stuff or not.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah, I was just wondering if you knew if the date for New York State was November one.

Melinda Perez:

I know it is for the financial statements.

Shannon Hillman:

They made a bunch of changes this year, so I just, I want to make sure that I'm correct in my dates, because we just got a memo the other day about this. So, let me, I'll do some digging. We can move into the next part, and I'll see if I can get that answer before our meeting is done.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. So, is there, do we need Melinda to hang with us here? Or can we release her?

Melinda Perez:

I think I can be released. If you do before the 1st approve it, just let us know, so we can send you the rep letter once it's been approved and dated as of that date. Okay?

Michele Hannagan:

All right. Very good.

Melinda Perez:

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Thank you so much.

Michele Hannagan:

Melinda, thank you.

Melinda Perez:

Have a good night.

Michele Hannagan:

Thanks, you too. Okay, so, do you want to do the financial report next? Does that make sense while you're looking, Shannon? Or do you want to skip to some... Okay. So, turn it over to Robin and Kevin for the finances.

Robin Blew:

Hello, everyone. Okay. Just to follow up with what we were just discussing, the 990, and I'm sure Kevin would agree, is always the 15th, do the 15th to the federal government of the fifth month after your fiscal year end. So, that would be November 15th. Now, the template is what you could check, Shannon, to see if they added a section where you're going to need to upload the 990. We've never uploaded the 990 before, but I know there were some changes, so that's probably where you could just check on that template, if you logged in. It might tell you whether you need it on November 1st, but yeah, the audited financial statements and Heveron's report needs to be in that template that we upload as of November 1st, which looks like we're in good shape for that. So, Kevin, did you have anything to add, or can I continue with my review? Good? Okay.

Robin Blew:

So, I'm going to start with going over where we ended up for last fiscal year. So, I'm assuming that you guys might've had a chance to review the final June budget review to actual, and that's what I'm going to go over first. Just some notes that we kind of noted throughout the whole fiscal year, but I'll just follow up, especially for our newest board members. So, we had a change in the RCSD, which is our main district for all of our revenue every year. And last year when we hit... I'm sorry, two years ago, I guess, so that for fiscal year ending 2020, when we did the original budget, we had an incorrect number, so we knew we were going to have lower revenue from that particular district for the year. There were no surprises there. This was reported all throughout last fiscal year with every budget review.

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:32:04]

Robin Blew:

All throughout last fiscal year with every budget review, pretty much. So that's why our revenue was a little bit down by \$21,000, was mainly because of that. It's not because our enrollment went down by any means. It was just because of that particular change in that the per pupil from \$14,000 to \$13,995. We also had lower grants on last year because we just had the final for the dissemination grant has just crossed over a fiscal year.

Robin Blew:

Our title was pretty much the same, that crosses over fiscal year by two months every year. And our interest income is just basically the normal interest income on our checking and savings account. It's not part of our investments. And we did have a good investment income gain on our Fidelity and Vanguard investments of \$77,000. I think Melinda went over a little bit of that as well.

Robin Blew:

We had our private donation of \$23,000, or I think it was like about \$23,000. And we also had our normal revenue for reimbursement for our teacher on special assignment. And then we also had our normal RCSD loan program, which is technology on textbooks and some library equipment, which is an in and then out, we recognized money as revenue, and then it goes out in our expenses. So that's normal.

Robin Blew:

We don't report on that all year long because it's just the loan program through RCSD but our auditors and accounting rules require us to show that as an in and then out. The food service, obviously, wasn't as high because of the COVID shutdown, but we didn't have anything surprisingly to report there. What we paid out and expenses we received in for free and reduced and for our parents. Free and reduced are the lunches that we get reimbursed from the federal government for our lunch program.

Robin Blew:

And the parents pay for the people that don't qualify for that. Parents pay if they choose to. And then we had our field studies, which obviously wasn't as high because it ended up being lower because of COVID. But there wasn't anything new to report, any field studies that didn't occur we did pay back to parents and we did give refunds that trickled in as time went on, but we did reflect that there.

Robin Blew:

Any questions so far for anyone? Okay. All right. So administration, we did have that error in our budget column. It was just an error in Excel under administrative benefits that was reported on and caught very early on last year. So we knew we were going to come in over that, that was corrected for the budget this year. So we won't have that variance going into 2021.

Robin Blew:

I'm trying to think. I don't think there was really anything else. The IT support contractors are a little bit lagging on their bills, but we did talk with them. So that's why that's a little bit under budget. It's just cause they didn't get their bills in, but not necessarily mean that we didn't spend all that IT support that we were budgeted for. That's all I have for administration. So I'm going to move on to instruction unless anybody has questions? No? Okay, cool.

Robin Blew:

So the instruction, we always budget more for teacher salaries. We did have a couple of sabbaticals and maternity leaves. That's why the substitute line was a little bit higher than anticipated. And our summer stipends always come in a little bit lower, but there really wasn't anything new to report with that. Our classroom supplies and consumables always seem to be a little bit more than budget, but some of that is just a reclassification between classroom supplies and office supplies.

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Robin Blew:

Because office supplies was down a little bit. So it just depends on what bucket it hits, but on a whole, our supplies category is not considerably over budget comparably to what we've had. We did have some COVID expenses and some older adjustments for some stuff that was hanging out on our reconciliation statement. Just old duplicate checks and some other things that we just cleaned up this year. That really wasn't anything that material to report on.

Robin Blew:

And again, the technology line that was also part of the RCSD loan. That was not part of our computer expenditures that the board had approved for us to spend out of our somewhat surplus funds, I believe. And then going into operations, we had a student testing, the iReady was primarily paid with our Title 4 funds, but we always show the allocation based on our regular budget.

Robin Blew:

We did hire the strategic leadership consultant, which is why our business services was a little bit higher. And our marketing recruitment was pretty much right on, spot on, for where budget was. Just a little bit less to spend, but not much. And capital facilities, there really isn't anything new to report there unless anybody has any questions. That's just traditionally our rent and utilities and our depreciation expenses, the non-cash expense for our lease hold improvements and any equipment expenditures that have a life over one year.

Robin Blew:

So we depreciate accordingly. Sometimes it's five, the lease hold improvements is usually over our entire lease. So we ended up coming in a little bit at a deficit of \$2,300 and our revenue was traditionally just lower this year due to some change, we didn't get the extra access money that we used to get for special aid from the government. And we didn't have a dissemination grant that help with some of our other expenditures.

Robin Blew:

So overall I feel it was a very good year and the budget was pretty much spot on and no huge variances or anything out of usual to report on, except for, of course our COVID expenditures as well as our other expenditures were down because of COVID. Any questions? My cat is driving me crazy, get out.

Jess:

Sorry, Robin, can I just ask a quick question just because I'm a new board member? Can you quickly let me know what the dissemination, I've heard that a few times tonight and I don't understand why we don't get that.

Robin Blew:

Okay. That was a grant that we had over three years where we disseminated services to help out school, was it [inaudible 00:38:24], I can't remember exactly the school. And it was a three-year grant and it ended, and we just had a little tiny bit of money for our July expenditures, for July of 2019, that went into this fiscal year. But traditionally the grant pretty much was over June 30th. We just had some

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additional expenditures for that. And if they wanted to explain the programmatic aspect of it, probably Shannon will be better to explain that to you than I would be.

Jess:

No, that was perfect. Thank you.

Michele Hannagan:

Any other questions for Robin? All right.

Robin Blew:

Then my next step was the July, August review for this year. So that's for our new fiscal year, which starts on July 1st, 2020 and ends on June 30th for our newest board members. So every month I usually give a budget to actual review and it usually contains these particular documents every month, which is the little summary sheet, which is a little boring right now, but that's just because we're only in two months for the school year and it's the summer. So it doesn't really have much to show yet.

Robin Blew:

And then we have the budget to actual, which is our budget expenditures to that date compared to what we've spent so far and then our traditional balance sheet. So I'll start with just the first overview sheet, which is just showing you our budget total and where we are actual to date. The July and August review is really not a very good indicator of how we usually have a budget to actual because it's the summer months. We don't really have any payroll except for our 12 month employees, which is just pretty much Shannon and Maureen.

Robin Blew:

The office of... Coordinator of Operations and Shannon. So there's really not a lot to really report on. So I don't really have anything out of normal for our spending for August. There was a little bit of a lot of money going out the door in prep for our newest hybrid remote model for COVID, but nothing really outside the norm. They did purchase \$31,590 of Chromebooks for this new model of learning, but I don't really have anything else to report on that at this point.

Robin Blew:

If you want to go to the detail report for budget review, I can show you the always get paid six months, six times over the whole year. So we bill out in June for our first payment, from all districts, which is Rochester city and several different suburban districts. So it's, they send payments six times a year, July, August, September, October, and it goes out over six months.

Robin Blew:

So then we receive that. So the \$489,000 that we've received to date is for, \$488,000 that we have received to date, is our first payment for July and August from all districts. And we budgeted \$489,000. So it's really kind of right, spot on. So we don't have any particular Title 1 or Title 2 expenditures yet. So I probably really shouldn't have put that 12,500 in that column because we haven't really started our school year yet to have any of that revenue allocated for any expenditures yet.

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Robin Blew:

The title is usually in and out. So that was kind of my error there, sorry about that. So in food services, just primarily start school a little bit earlier. So the food service that is in that section is not a regular whole month. That's only a little bit in August that we're reporting on there. Our food service program doesn't really get going until September and same thing with field studies.

Robin Blew:

We show those two things because we primarily get money in and we have specific expenditures only to those. So that's why we make them kind of their own little category for food service and field study and site seminars as well. We don't really break things out, putting expenses, as a whole, just those three categories is usually what we want to see in that kind of departmental type detail.

Robin Blew:

So the administration summary, this is primarily just our administration staff that is not instructional. And I don't have anything to really report there. It's pretty much, everything's kind of going right along the way we would expect for the July and August expenditures. And the instructional, there's just not really anything going on right now in the summer stipends, which are the stipend pay that teachers get to come in and do their professional development over the summer.

Robin Blew:

Supplies are always higher in these early months of July, August, September, and October. And then it starts to slow down in November usually. And that's just the supplies that we do to get going through the beginning of the school year. Our audit expenditures are usually higher for, pretty much just for the first three months of the year. They usually are August, September, October, and a little bit in November and then that usually comes down.

Robin Blew:

Business services, nothing new to report there. Our insurance, nothing new to report there, except for the fact we just might not have all the bills at this particular point in time for July and August reporting. But I think we get a really big bill coming in October, which then usually I'll spread out over the remainder of the year from October to October, just depends on how the insurance runs. And of course we had the COVID expenditures and we don't have any rent in the summer months or janitorial in the summer months.

Robin Blew:

So if you compare, which as you can see, we have a year to date actual for 1920 column. And if you were to look at those, the 231, 391, are our grand total expenditures as of August 31st and last year at this time in August, we were at 238 (\$238,000). So we're pretty much right where we're supposed to be. Nothing's really out of the ordinary at all, which is really great. And the same thing with the revenue as well, 488 (\$488,000) versus 492 (\$492,000) last year at this time. So we really couldn't ask for more stable numbers comparing year to year.

Michele Hannagan:

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Just had a question relative to the COVID expenditures. Shannon, do you, I know it's probably too soon to tell, but what's your burn rate of what you're doing, what you're buying for COVID?

Shannon Hillman:

I think our burn rate is going slow down. We did a lot of buying in the beginning around like cleaning, organization supplies. We bought like cleaning caddies for every classroom and reusable towels, that kind of thing. I don't think we're going to have nearly as much of that. And after we had already done some spending, Monroe County came through and gave us a whole lot of free, the consumable kinds of things, like hand sanitizer and PPE equipment.

Shannon Hillman:

So, and then they actually asked us if we would need replenishment's throughout the year, which we said yes. So it sounds like there's going to be more coming from the County. So I think we made our big purchases. I don't think there's going to be as many purchases in that category as we go throughout the year, because we already, we still have a huge stock of stuff under everyone's desk, so.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay, thank you.

Shannon Hillman:

Yep.

Michele Hannagan:

Other questions for Robin?

Robin Blew:

Well I was just going to go over the balance sheet just so-

Michele Hannagan:

Oh, right.

Robin Blew:

If we have time, if not do you want me to continue or?

Michele Hannagan:

So we've got ...

Robin Blew:

Just see if anybody has questions. There's not much to report on the balance sheet, but.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah. So, Annemarie why don't you give us five more minutes.

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Robin Blew:

So the balance sheet is just showing our cashflow situation, any type of money that we're due in and money that we owe out at this particular time for August 31st, our cash on hand is very strong. It's a little stronger than the year before which during our finance committee, I was supposed to investigate that.

Robin Blew:

And it was just the same situation that I had reported on is that we ended up getting our July and August payments a little bit earlier whereas last year our September and October payments a little bit earlier than we did last year. So that's why our cash is a little bit stronger compared to last August in 2019. Our cash restricted, the rule for having a dissolution account amount used to be \$75,000 then we had to bump it up to a hundred. So that's why that's different.

Robin Blew:

And then we just keep a little money market account just for, in a different section, just to have a little bit of extra cash outside of our operating, which is at \$29,000. Our accounts receivable, again, it's the same reason why our cash is higher. We don't have as many people that owe us as of August 31st versus as we did last year, which is why our cash is better.

Robin Blew:

Our prepaid insurance is primarily just that leasehold improvement for the HV AC that had us a couple of years prior and a little bit of some expenses that we paid ahead of time, but nothing unusual. And then we have our equipment and our leasehold improvements, which is our total fixed assets, which pretty much is a little bit down primarily because we had some things that were disposed and we're not increasing our leasehold improvements any more as we were for several years in the past of the expansion.

Robin Blew:

So our accounts payable that is primarily just the New York state teacher's retirement, that the bill we received and booked accordingly. And we pay that out September, October, and November. And then the rest of it is just our deductions payable for what we withhold from employee's paychecks and then we pay out according to the various health insurance or state disability, New York state teacher's retirement and things of that nature.

Robin Blew:

So, our net income for July and August is coming in at 257 (\$257,000), last year at this time it was at 253 (\$253,000). And our investments are doing very well. We thought we had a higher gain on fidelity at the end of August, but that was when we realized that we did have that donation for the railroad stock, which is why that is from 655 (\$655,00) at June to 696 (\$696,000) in August. So we still had a gain, but it wasn't as much as we had originally factored, so that \$23,000 in donation, but our investments are still strong and not losing. Any questions?

Michele Hannagan:

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Okay. So I had asked Shannon in the chat box, if she had found the answer that we need, and it does appear that we need to approve the audit this evening to be on time for submission. Shannon, do you want to add to that?

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah. So there's a new template that I don't believe we had before, Robin, that needs to be filled out that basically takes everything from the audit and puts it into this template. And it says we need the independent auditor's report on financial statements and notes, the template file containing all of the information. What's confusing is that it says that there's an additional items that are optional to be included for the November 2nd. But you have to explain why they're not being included. The 990 is one of them, including the management letter and the management letter response, and then the corrective action plan.

Shannon Hillman:

So I don't know, to me, it feels like we have to get some level of approval in order for this to be submitted by November 2nd.

Robin Blew:

I think that if it was based on, I mean, I'm not sure what you guys want to do as a board, but if it's saying that November 2nd, you can include the 990, unless you have to give it a reason. You might just say that the reason is because we have to have it approved, the board needs more time to approve it. It'll be approved on November 11th and then it can be uploaded at that particular point in time. But the management letter, management letter response and everything else, if you can approve the audit that Melinda presented tonight. I think that's a decent reason why you're not uploading the 990 ahead of time, but that's-

Mark Schiesser:

I have a thought.

Robin Blew:

I think that would be, yeah.

Michele Hannagan:

Yes.

Mark Schiesser:

I have a thought and that is that, what if we were to approve both tonight? Assuming Kevin ultimately approves it. So in other words, the board approves it, if Kevin approves it, I left the conversation somewhere. I got cut off. So I don't know where you guys left that, but I would be comfortable as a board member approving it pending Kevin's approval. So in other words, the whole board approves it and approves it pending Kevin's approval and then Kevin looks at it in the next 10 days and decides everything's AOK and it goes, as it is. If he doesn't, then we have to come back and do an executive session or something like that.

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Kevin Sutherland:

I think I'm fine tonight approving the audit report. The part that I want to follow up with Hevron on and changing is the management letter because there're some comments in there I don't agree with. And then I will take and tie up the 990 by the end of this week. And I would be fine if the board says something to the effect of the 990 ties out to audit financials, It's approved.

George DesMarteau:

I think Mark's suggestion can work. I think you probably should look something in the nature of a certification, written certification, from Kevin you filed with the minutes or with the office, with the school leader, indicating that he's reviewed and approved the final audit and the final 990. The other thing with regard to the 990 would be simply to approve the audit, submit that and attach the 990 draft, noting that it's a draft, and then file it subsequently with the final version. I mean, they can't argue that you're not being transparent if you do that.

Michele Hannagan:

What about the management letter, George?

George DesMarteau:

Well, I think that was part of what we were saying that Kevin was going to approve, right? I mean the management letter.

Michele Hannagan:

Yes, but if I heard you correctly it was, we could approve the audit tonight and we could upload a draft 990. Were you thinking we would approve the management letter with the audit as long as Kevin reviewed and certified it? Is that what you're suggesting?

George DesMarteau:

Yes, that's what I was suggesting.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay.

George DesMarteau:

And then simply tack on the 990 draft indicating, mark it drafts, stamp a draft, whatever, so that it's clear and then you can just file a final version later. I don't see how they can argue you're being totally transparent about it.

Shannon Hillman:

Okay.

Kevin Sutherland:

Yeah, that's fine.

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Michele Hannagan:

Okay, then-

Mark Schiesser:

I make a motion that we approve the audit report pending Kevin's certification letter.

Michele Hannagan:

Need a second.

Jess Wanner:

I'll second.

Michele Hannagan:

All right, Jess has seconded. All those in favor of approving the audit and including the management letter in advance of, and with Kevin's certification, please signify by saying aye or raising your hand.

Speaker 4:

Aye.

Michele Hannagan:

Aye.

All:

Aye.

Michele Hannagan:

All those opposed? Any abstentions? All right. The motion carries and the 990, just so I'm clear, it sounds like we're saying we're going to upload a draft. So we aren't going to approve the 990?

George DesMarteau:

That's what I'm suggesting is that the draft, you're not really approving the draft. You're simply attaching it, indicating that it's a draft. So by definition it's not final. And then in November's meeting you will approve the final version, file it with the IRS and then send it on to the State for their purposes.

Michele Hannagan:

Kevin, does that sound good to you?

Kevin Sutherland:

Yes.

Michele Hannagan:

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All right. So then, unless anybody wants to duke it out about that, we're going to put the 990 approval on the November board meeting and Shannon you'll attach a draft. Great, thank you. Kevin, thank you. Robin, any questions for Robin because I think, wait, the tiles moved, did Robin already leave? Where is she?

Shannon Hillman:

She's here.

Michele Hannagan:

I swear things get shifted, there you are. You were in the center now you're on the left. All right. So any other questions for Robin? If not, then Robin, you're welcome to stay, but you're also welcome to do something more exciting than being on a Zoom call.

Robin Blew:

Well, if nobody needs me then I think I'll probably sign off. But if anybody has questions that they think of, you guys know how to reach me, okay?

Michele Hannagan:

Thank you so much, Robin, for all you do. These reports are great. Thanks so much. Take care.

Elizabeth Pietrzkowski:

Quick clarification, the draft that we're uploading, where is that being uploaded to? Because it's not the IRS.

Shannon Hillman:

The draft will be uploaded to the New York State Education Department portal. It's where everything, anytime reporting that I'm doing, it goes through the portal and gets sent to the Charter School Office and the other powers that be.

Michele Hannagan:

And so Alison let's make sure we just note that in the minutes that it's posted to the, or uploaded, to the New York State Ed.

Elizabeth Pietrzkowski:

Yeah. That's why I was asking, sorry.

Michele Hannagan:

Oh no, no, no, don't be sorry. It's good, good for clarification. Okay. So we're going to shift over to committee updates and Jess, do you want to give us an update on advocacy?

Jess Wanner:

Sure. Just a brief update. So Shannon and I are going to meet with Deb Hamner in early November to review a SWOT interview process for potential GCCS partnerships that we're looking at. Deb's kind of

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taking the lead on this. So we'll see how that goes. I'll report back in November and then Shannon made the suggestion that maybe we do our first advocacy meeting mid November with parents and community members, whoever we would like from last year and see where we're at. We're kind of moving a little slow intentionally just because everybody's been a little bit busy with opening the school and parents are able to commit as much time. So, that's my update.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. Thank you. Now, oh wait. I don't think I saw Nolica. Wait.

Shannon Hillman:

I can give a quick update for Nolica-

Michele Hannagan:

Okay, for discipline?

Shannon Hillman:

I don't think that she's here. Yeah, the update is we're still working on the code of conduct. It's going really well, but it's also a slow process. We're more than halfway through now, but we're taking it line by line and just making sure that all of the language is really inclusive and restorative. And I think the plan is for the team really to test drive some of it, which I think I shared last month. So it's in process. That's all I've got.

Michele Hannagan:

Awesome. All right. Okay. Now we're going to talk about the nominating committee and Annemarie, is going to talk a little bit and then we're going to talk a little bit about Annemarie.

Annemarie Wess:

Hey everybody. So is this where I give my update of updates.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah.

Annemarie Wess:

I am currently in Florida. I moved down about three weeks ago. I accepted a position here and it all happened in under six weeks. It was not something I saw coming. I was kind of just fishing and then a position was here that I could not walk away from. And so now I have the unique position of, I guess, asking to remain on the board, but remain remotely while I'm in Florida.

Annemarie Wess:

I know that that sets a precedent and is not something that we have done before. So I recognize the position it puts the board in, that it puts myself in, and that it will mean staying on track of things at GCCS and just being here for everybody in a way that's a little more difficult than before, but I do want

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to stay if that is possible. But that is my update and where I'm at right now. So I leave myself at the mercy of the board's decision.

Michele Hannagan:

So, this is definitely unprecedented, and Annemarie did of course let me and Shannon know and we had some email exchanges with Susan and George you were looped in on those as well, right? We're going back up six weeks now. So, I thought we could have some open discussion if you think it's more appropriate, George, that we do this in executive session and we ask Annemarie to sit out, I don't know. We've never done this before, but I, oh, go ahead.

George DesMarteau:

Well, I don't think it needs to be an executive session and it's not like you're discussing Annemarie's qualifications or information about her work or anything like that. What you're really talking about a policy issues so I think it's appropriate that it be discussed openly. So that would be my view as far as.

Michele Hannagan:

Great, because that's how I want to do it too because I want it to be part of the public record and Shannon, you can back me up on any details that I missed. We did reach out, I wanted to reach out to Susan right away and to let Susan know, after we had already asked Annemarie if she wanted to stay, could we do this? Is there anything blocking us? And Susan's response was that, yes, this would be unprecedented, but there's nothing that prohibits us from doing that. Shannon, do you want to add anything to that? What I'm saying or am I capturing it?

Shannon Hillman:

No, that's yeah, that's right. It didn't sound like it was out of the question.

Michele Hannagan:

Right.

Shannon Hillman:

Just something for us to really consider.

Michele Hannagan:

So I certainly had the thought and then I'll just say a couple of things and I'd like to open it up for board consideration. And granted, you guys, this is the first you've heard it. So give you a minute to kind of digest. I, number one, was thrilled, frankly, that Annemarie talked about wanting to stay connected. And that, that would be really sad for her to not be a part of the GCCS community.

Michele Hannagan:

My other thought is, this is one of these strange silver linings to this pandemic is we are all virtual anyway for the foreseeable, I don't know, who knows how long, I guess I won't speculate. So I believe that if Annemarie is committed to staying connected, she's already been a board member, she knows

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the Rochester community. I for one would be really interested in having her stay and then I'll stop talking and open it up to others.

Jess Wanner:

Congratulations Annemarie, first of all. Two things, policy-wise I think it would be great if you could stay. I mean, technology is the way it is, but I think as a policy, can we make it so two positions out of however many the board has, are allowed to be remote so that it doesn't turn into ... I think it's very, very important that the majority of the board members are able to visit the school, see the environment, all of those things that are why we're board members I think is really important to continue. So, that's number one. And then number two, I don't know, I just started on the board, but is it fair that an officer, I don't know what you call it, vice-president or whatever you are. I'm really sorry I don't know the title, but is it fair that that is-

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [01:04:04]

Jess Wanner:

Sorry, I don't know the title, but is it fair that that is a remote position or would it be better to nominate somebody that's onsite?

George DesMarteau:

I think if you were going to be that specific, you probably would have to do some work with regard to the bylaws in terms of limiting it to remote members. I think that you can look at this as a very narrow circumstance where you have sitting board members. It's not as if you're going out and recruiting somebody from out of state or out of the area or out of the community. So I think if we're talking in terms of precedent, we're talking at least a precedent where someone began on the board and the question would become number one, are we saying that's appropriate to continue through that person's current term? Would be one limitation. Is it permissible for that term to be extended to a new term? That's a distinction that you could make.

George DesMarteau:

But I don't think that... I think it's rather problematic if you try to draw a distinction around no more than two or whatever. And frankly, I don't... Given the nature of communications and how things are done these days, I don't think that there's necessarily any prejudice as a practical matter of having an officer be in a remote circumstance. Because most everything is done electronically anyway, or at least by and large. So I wouldn't necessarily see that as a stumbling block, the officer's status.

Traci Terrance:

Yeah. Along those lines, Annemarie, yes, congratulations. Wow, that's not what I expected when Michelle was saying your name. So congratulations to you.

Annemarie Wess:

Thank you. I didn't expect this either to be sure.

Traci Terrance:

But then I guess I should have realized something was off because it was still kind of daylight where you are and it's starting to get a little dark here. So any who, yeah, I guess questions, I am in support of Annemarie staying on the board, it makes sense. You've been here. You have a wealth of information. You want to be here. So why complicate the matter? I think just in terms of questions, all right, are there strengths or are there limitations to you being remote at this point in the role that you play on the board? And I think it's just the different situation. We're recruiting new board members, do we really want people, new members, to be remote for all the reasons that Jess mentioned? Wanting familiarity with the school, et cetera. But as far as Annemarie is concerned, I vote yes to stay.

George DesMarteau:

I do want to note that this is much easier, while we're operating under the executive order, dealing with meetings because the remote participation by a trustee under normal circumstances requires additional public notice requirements about the fact that a member will be participating remotely including the location of where the members participating from and a couple of other things. So in the current circumstances, probably for the next few months or maybe even longer, it's going to be a lot easier logistically. Even under the normal circumstances, it's not impossible to do or difficult, but I just would note that it becomes a little bit more technically difficult because of the notice requirements. I would also point out, I mean, as long as I can recall, we've never had every position filled. So it's hardly as if allowing this circumstance to continue is blocking a waiting list of people trying to get onto the board. So I think you have some flexibility just simply because of that, frankly.

Annemarie Wess:

I was going to ask, would that allow, given the executive order in the next few months, would that allow us to potentially put together a policy or figure out how I would participate including the public notice. And that way that kind of gives us a window of time to figure things out and determine next steps and if this is something we do want to pursue. I mean, I will not pitch a fit if you guys are like, "No." But I do want to express my whole hearted desire to stay. As I told Michele and Shannon, when I found out that I did get this job and was moving, one of the very, very few things that I clung to and was very sad about leaving was GCCS. So I just want you guys to be aware that I am in this. I will do my best to make it work.

George DesMarteau:

I actually don't think we would need anything in the nature of a policy or change because if the executive order ends at some point, the process and how to do it is statutorily spelled out. So, I mean, we would just follow the rules. Again, I'm only pointing out that there's extra stuff, it's not undoable. It has been done fairly frequently and it's not really that difficult. And so I really don't see an issue with it.

Kevin Sutherland:

Hi Annemarie, it's Kevin. Shannon was kind enough, she gave me a heads up about what was happening. So congratulations on your move. Especially now that it's getting cold up here, I'm a little jealous. But what I was thinking is eventually the executive orders, and they come into effect again, we could look at this as a pilot and document how it's working. And if everything is successful, when we get to that point where we have to justify it, we already have documentation in effect to support if it's working out well.

Michele Hannagan:

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Yeah. That's a great idea, Kevin.

Annemarie Wess:

I really like that idea. That's actually a great idea.

Michele Hannagan:

Anyone else want to weigh in?

George DesMarteau:

I was just going to say if SED is not going to push back on it, I don't see who would have standing or even come forward and raise an issue about it. And so I'm relieved to hear, and frankly, a little on the surprise side, that SED didn't find a way to make this more difficult.

Shannon Hillman:

It was a little surprised too, but it was... She said, no, there's nothing that says that we can't.

Annemarie Wess:

Yeah, I was shocked. I thought, for sure, the minute they found out, they'd be like, no, never.

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah they did... She did hint that if we end up moving in the direction of not allowing Annemarie to stay as a member, that she could continue on as a committee member. So not as a board member, but serve on a committee from a distance. And that there's nothing that stops us from doing that down the road or now or anything like that. So that was one piece that we haven't really talked about, but that's also there.

Shannon Hillman:

And then I just, I also was going to insert, I don't know that it necessarily needs to be an approval or anything, but Annemarie mentioned wanting to make sure that she really had a pulse on the school and had touch points. And so I wonder if we sort of recommend to you, Annemarie, that there's some way for you to be able to be connected to the school, whether that happens to be a time when you can come back to Rochester and don't have to quarantine and be able to visit. Or attend a meeting physically when we get to that point, so that we have like face time with you during this time.

Annemarie Wess:

I'm open to that idea. I think in my mind, I thought that there would be like... Because I don't think that this is out of the ordinary for boards just in general. And so I've read that some boards require their members to come on a quarterly basis so that they can meet in person. And so I figured at least once a quarter I need to show up in Rochester and say hello. And find what's going on at GCCS and just check in on everything, which I'm open to that idea as well.

Michele Hannagan:

That is great.

George DesMarteau:

I'll say that qualitatively, I don't think there's any difference between your attending remotely and attending in person in terms of legitimacy. And I think under the current circumstances, I don't think you have to take any affirmative action. I think you simply, the minutes can reflect that there was a discussion about it and the absence of somebody making a motion. I think it's best to probably just let it continue rather than try to do something which may start to draw restrictions around what we're talking about.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah.

George DesMarteau:

Just leave things because she's currently a sitting member. And I don't see any reason to touch that scenario.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah. So George is actually... Thank you George, it's like you were reading my mind. I wanted to bring it up for discussion, give the opportunity for feedback or pros and cons, if anyone had them, but we don't really need to take any action. I think that Kevin's suggestion about continuing to document how this is going. We can continue to reflect that in future minutes, but otherwise sort of speak now or hold your peace until next month. All right then. Annemarie-

George DesMarteau:

I'm reading your mind right now. Are you thinking of a hot fudge sundae? Because that's what I'm getting a lot of right now.

Michele Hannagan:

Yep. That's what's happening. Yeah, I'm having audio video connections, and I've learned from, we use Microsoft Teams, that if I cut the video, it sometimes makes the audio better. No, I really have my hot of Sunday over here that I keep taking, kidding. All right, well Annmarie, you're in. Continue being here.

Annemarie Wess:

Yay. Thanks guys.

Michele Hannagan:

I'm very excited about that.

Annemarie Wess:

Thank you everybody.

Michele Hannagan:

And you are welcome and thank you. It's just that whole gratitude, right? GCCS is all about gratitude, so very grateful. For a personnel committee, I just want to take 30 seconds to say that we did recall at the

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time we spent last month on the school leader evaluation. We did take the action, the personnel committee, to follow up with Deb Hanmer about doing a deep dive into the framework and structures, administrative support for GCCS. And Deb did send a proposal, but in full disclosure, I have not reviewed it thoroughly. I've looked at it and I need to spend some more time and talk with Shannon and other committee members about that. So I plan to put that on the November board meeting agenda. And okay, with that, we're going to move down now to the district safety plan. Oh, wait a second.

Shannon Hillman:

Yep. I think that's-

Michele Hannagan:

Yep.

Shannon Hillman:

That's me.

Michele Hannagan:

And let's do 10 minutes, Annemarie, see how we do.

Annemarie Wess:

Okay.

Michele Hannagan:

There's 20 on the agenda.

Shannon Hillman:

I think we might be less. If I can share my screen. So I wanted to just bring you up to speed with the district safety plan. So the plan originally was to combine district and building plans, and that just didn't happen the way we had hoped. I submitted the summary of the building plan, which is on our website. I'm actually bringing it up to our website page around safety right now. And they got back to me and said that doesn't cut the mustard anymore. You need to have a separate district safety plan. And I said, what if we want to appeal? And they said you really can't do that. And they showed me all sorts of other language. So even though that was the recommendation from our original safety audit, I guess that's not the case anymore or there was some language that we weren't originally given.

Shannon Hillman:

So Lisa Wing, at the beginning of the school year, said, "How can I help you?"

Shannon Hillman:

And I said, "Can you help me look into this whole combining plan thing?"

Shannon Hillman:

So she did that. And then when I told her that we had to do a district plan, she said, "Let me do it for you."

Shannon Hillman:

And I said, "Thank you." So she volunteered her time to put together this district safety plan. And then the safety committee has been meeting to look over what she did, which basically a lot of the language was already written in our building plan and then just sort of copied, pasted and built out from there. So this has had many eyes. The website has just sort of a summary of all of our safety measures that we take. The draft district safety plan is posted now, and I'm about to show you. But one of the things, as we've always talked about, is we need that 30 day public comment time.

Shannon Hillman:

And when I sent sort of a new submission of the district plan to explain that we weren't going to be on time but we were going to take the time to do the public comments and the public hearing and make sure that we were following all of those directions. They said, "Great, you get a gold star, you're doing it right. You'll just be late in the dates, but this won't be the case for you next year." So they're very happy with the pathway that we're taking. So it's right now up for public comments that actually went up on, sorry, October 11th, so that we had our 30 days for November 11th. I've put it out through several different emails, it's going out in Currents again for public comments to our community. And so with that, I'm going to just quick show you the draft.

Shannon Hillman:

Overall, it is a high level, high leverage, whatever the word is, draft that really gets into not so much the nitty-gritty policies and procedures like our building plan does, but more like the overarching, how do we respond to threats and violence on our campus? And that includes the RMSC. And how are we working with security? And how are we training our students and our staff members to make sure that we are all in the know? But first, this first section is just about identifying who we are. We are just basically keeping the same team for building level versus district level. It has all of the components that we need for both. And so it feels like it doesn't make sense to have two different teams. It makes more sense just to have the same team be a part of that.

Shannon Hillman:

So this was in the Drive, I'm not going to go through piece by piece with you. I just want you to kind of get a lay of the land here. Sharing about prevention. We identify things that are happening currently, or even we talked about restorative justice, some of the newer practices that we've put in place around prevention, that's also listed in here. Early detection, some of this is information that you get sort of this boiler plate information. That is the same no matter what school you go to, so this information is there.

Shannon Hillman:

We spent a lot of time on school security and had Tom Gleason, our new facilities director, put his eyes on this, as well as Larry, just to kind of make sure that what we have listed here is really what we are in agreement of. And what we plan to do is take this information and put it into a letter that RMSC signs as a way to say that we agree to what's happening on campus for security. And that's just something that

we all feel like is best practice. And it was a recommendation given to us a couple of years ago now with the audit.

Shannon Hillman:

And then it moves into intervention and response and the kinds of things that we do to make sure that we are holding up ways to handle a situation of violence or of a threat and how we would notify or communicate. Here's the little piece around procedures, whereas it's completely spelled out in our building plan. Bomb threat, intruder, missing child, all of those pieces. And then what happens afterwards and how do we respond? So this does name our zero tolerance policy, as it stands right now, notification of parents and the community. We put in our SEL team, our Social Emotional Learning Team, and restorative justice. Those are all part of... Listed within our responses and long-term intervention.

Shannon Hillman:

And then it moves into just all of the different training. And we spend a lot of time here, too. It's pretty amazing how many trainings we do in a year. Not realizing how many when we didn't have it listed out in this way, but we have quite a bit of training that happens with staff. And then also the things that we do with students each year. So that's listed. And I think that brings us to the end where it just names, the very specific drills and things that we have to do each year. So that's just information that just names that, "Yes, we know that these are the things that we have to do." I did see a chat box, something pop up. So I'm going to pull that.

Michele Hannagan:

No, that was from me to you, Shannon.

Shannon Hillman:

Oh, okay, okay.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah.

Shannon Hillman:

So I think I'm just going to open it up for questions, comments. And I think we do need to do an official, this is our public comment period, so that we can put that on record.

Michele Hannagan:

That was my question. We're not voting on this tonight? We have to... But do we need to make a motion to recognize the 30 day comment period?

Shannon Hillman:

Yes. And this is really, I invited the public to come to this meeting tonight to give feedback or anything too. So I think just like we usually do in August or September, we sort of have to identify that this is our public hearing time. But no, we're not approving this tonight. We're going to actually approve, I'm hoping approve it, November 11th.

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Michele Hannagan:

Okay. Questions? Wonderings? I just got to say great work, Shannon, and hats off to Lisa Wing. Please thank her on our behalf for-

Shannon Hillman:

I will.

Michele Hannagan:

... Helping with this heavy lift. There's no rhyme or reason to what we'll get approval for, stuff that doesn't make sense, but no, we're going to do a district plan anyway.

Shannon Hillman:

She did... It was actually, they were extremely helpful. The State was extremely helpful. They have a whole checklist that she used and I used to make sure that we hit every single mark. So we're feeling really good about being in compliance, which is good.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. So if there's no other feedback, and of course comment period is open, so anybody can comment. Then what exactly do we need the minutes to reflect, George, in terms of officially approving comment period?

George DesMarteau:

I think you could simply note the discussion that the school leader presented the district safety plan that's been posted and open for public comment, reviewed it, the Board had no questions, and the matter will be considered for final approval at the November meeting.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. So we'll make sure that's in the minutes, Allison, Elizabeth, the dynamic duo of minutes.

Alison:

So we don't need a motion to go into public comment?

Michele Hannagan:

No.

George DesMarteau:

No.

Allison Shultes:

Okay.

George DesMarteau:

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No, the adoption will take place by motion at the next meeting.

Shannon Hillman:

And I think we could put in the minutes, Alison, that I'm inviting anyone within these 30 days to email me if they have additional comments. So if you want to put that into the minutes, so that it's somewhere else other than the places that I've put it in my emails and other correspondence, that would be fine.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay, I want to make sure that you've got what you need, Alison, before we move on. So you good?

Allison Shultes:

Yep.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay.

Elizabeth Pietrykowski:

Could George repeat what he said before that though? About what we could say in the meeting minutes about the public comment period.

George DesMarteau:

I was simply saying that I think, if you're asking me, I think what I said was that the School Leader recorded and reviewed the building's district safety plan with the board and advised the board that it had been posted, for public comment, and that the final approval would take place at the November meeting. And that it remains open for public comment until... Is it November 11th is the end of the 30 days?

Michele Hannagan:

Yes.

George DesMarteau:

That it remains open for public comment until November 11th.

Shannon Hillman:

And it was posted publicly on the website, but then it was also posted in the D&C. So I don't know, Allison, if you want to write that down too.

George DesMarteau:

Yeah, I would note both of them.

Michele Hannagan:

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Okay. Any other... Elizabeth or Allison, are you guys good?

Speaker 8:

I think so.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. All right. So thank you, Shannon. Thank you for that hard work. All right. So now we're going to shift to the School Leader update. We're going to be talking about enrollment, demographics and a tent permit. Boy, that just doesn't even go there.

Shannon Hillman:

No. So I'll start with the tent because it's quick and easy. So the process isn't quick and easy-

Michele Hannagan:

Ten minutes, Annemarie.

Shannon Hillman:

... But the answer is quick and easy. So we thought that we had to do a tent permit through State Ed and after lots and lots of back and forth, we found out we don't have to do the permit through State Ed. And in fact, we need to do it through the City. And it's all because of when our charter was initially given to us, there was some, at this date, I think it was like 2015 or something, that they changed. And anyway, when I thought that we were having to do this through State Ed, we needed a Board approval of the tent, even though the tent was gifted to us, but we don't don't need that anymore as far as I understand. So that's off the agenda, we can take it right off.

Shannon Hillman:

One thing that does have to go on the agenda, and that can be later if you want, is I do feel like we need to open it up for a discussion around our insurance, our building insurance. We received the renewal package for our insurance and I just, I think it's like what we... General practice for us to share what the changes are. But why don't I go into enrollment, which I think is more exciting.

Michele Hannagan:

Actually, before you do that, I think just a point of order, in terms of the insurance stuff, is there a time deadline for that?

Shannon Hillman:

Yes. This is the renewal period. So the finance committee does... Nothing's really changing, it's more just notification for the minutes. So the finance committee has already viewed and talked about it and this is more of just bringing the board up to speed.

Michele Hannagan:

Oh, okay. All right. But we do have to have a motion and a vote for that?

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Shannon Hillman:

I don't think so because we're not... It's not a changeover to anything.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay.

Shannon Hillman:

It's just renewal.

Michele Hannagan:

All right. So we'll put five minutes somewhere.

Shannon Hillman:

Well, the dishwasher is going to be a quick conversation too, so maybe we just combine those two things.

Michele Hannagan:

We'll combine them. All right, go ahead, Shannon.

Shannon Hillman:

All right, enrollment. So in the folder, but I will share my screen again. There was a document that said, who are we? I've been doing this the last couple of years, but I made some changes, some additions that I think are fruitful for us to talk about. So let me just try to expand this a little bit. So usually on the first page, I share about our enrollment with our suburban students and our city students because there's always this sort of question as far as how many of our students are from the suburbs versus the city? But we went a little bit... We did a little extra, we have the per pupil allocation for each of the suburbs, which I think is always really interesting to look at. It was something that I remember Michelle Bearack was always very interested in as to how that balloon price over a child's head when they come to our school is different.

Shannon Hillman:

And so when we did our budget, we took these numbers and averaged them, sort of, sort of averaged them, but thought about how the city is mostly represented. So anyway, it's just interesting for you to see. Along with how many students are part of each of these districts. But then with that, and I mentioned this in our retreat, I think sometimes we think that if they're from the suburbs, then they don't qualify for any of the sort of at-risk subcategories that we think about. So I wanted you to see that many of them do, actually. So this FR is free and reduced. So the students that are listed here qualify as free and reduced. This is students of color, so these are the students that are named as students of color in these different districts. Students with an IEP, students with a 504 and students that qualify for English language learning are also listed here.

Shannon Hillman:

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So I just thought that was important for all of you to kind of see how it's broken down here, along with the percentages. So what you have listed here is the percentages of students that we have total. So we have 80.6% of our whole population this year is from RCSD. 19.4% is from the suburbs. And then of our free and reduced population, 16.7% of that is from the suburbs and so on. I hope that makes sense to everyone. So there's this page where we go into this, I'll pause for a second. Are there any questions around this particular table or comments?

Michele Hannagan:

This is a great table. I'm actually really grateful for it. I love how it flushes out all the subgroups.

Tasha Stevens:

Yeah, this is really helpful, the breakdown. But what is the target that we're trying to get to? In terms of... Because I know they don't really do break downs of student of color. It's more of a free and reduced lunch.

Shannon Hillman:

That's right.

Tasha Stevens:

And that language, but ultimately they're looking at students of color, so?

Shannon Hillman:

I know, it's... So I think that's really what we've been doing with Deb, is trying to figure out, do we have a particular target? Originally our target was, in our mission, is to match those percentages of the county. I didn't pull that up. So I don't have that as far as the current percentages, but I do know that we've been fairly close. Although I believe the free and reduced percentage for Monroe County is somewhere closer to 50%. So we're under that. I don't know what it is for students of color or for people of color. I chose to put that in because that feels important to me that we're looking at that as well.

Shannon Hillman:

Along with some of the comments that I've heard over the years from both families in school and out of school, saying like, "Wow, we're a really white population." And so I just wanted to be able to kind of... Well, let's put some numbers to that to figure out how white we are and what that means. So, yeah, I think it's a great table that we could continue to work on and see if there's change over time, which actually we do get to that a little bit in the next page.

Tasha Stevens::

And I also had just a follow-up. I know we talked about the county numbers, but do we have a table reflecting city numbers as well? Because I know... Doesn't the law change [crosstalk 01:34:36].

Shannon Hillman:

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Reflecting the city. I don't... So I didn't do any comparison with county or city in these, but thank you. I will make sure that... We did it for our charter, but I didn't do it in this particular table. So I would be happy to pull those together and maybe we could look at that next month.

Speaker 9:

Yeah.

Shannon Hillman:

If that's okay? All right. So our racial slash ethnic enrollment, these are the categories that are listed on the New York State data dot gov website. So I wanted to go specifically with what categories they name because that's what's ultimately sent when students are registered through our school, that's what's sent to the state. In our BEDs data, is what we call it. So I wanted it all to be kind of the same language. And so this is a comparison between last year and this year, showing that we have increased in our black and African-American population, as far as percentage goes. We've decreased in our multiracial percentage, which is interesting. Increased in Hispanic. Remained the same in Asian and Native Pacific Islander. And decreased in our white population by 3%. So it's not like earth-

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:36:04]

Shannon Hillman:

Decreased in our white population by 3%. So it's not like earth shattering, but there is some change there. I'll pause. I don't want to go too fast. We okay? Okay. So this... I was very curious, it all comes down to what Shannon was curious about. I was very curious to see where we were with our socioeconomic status versus our free and reduced lunch populations, and if there is sort of a correlation, and according to this graph, there is. It doesn't mean that every single child that is a student of color is also a child that is free and reduced. But I wanted to just kind of see like how those percentages fall into the category, especially across grade level. And this also kind of gives us a sense as to, are we making some progress in these areas as we have new families come in in kindergarten.

Shannon Hillman:

So you'll see that kindergarten is our highest percentage of both students of color and of free and reduced lunch, which is one of the ones that the state is paying attention to. And then it sort of decreases from there, with our lowest percentages being in sixth grade, which is interesting. But it does show that again, we're making progress in the ways that the state sees us making progress around enrollment. And I really attribute a lot of that to our GoodSchoolsRoc application. I think that that really did help our reach. So I'm really happy about that. And we just have a great kindergarten, I'm super excited about it. So this is really good all around. Any questions about this, or comments that...

Michele Hannagan:

Shannon, it's Michelle. I just want to reiterate that how great this is. I'm also thinking these are really good data to be giving to Deb and I think the advocacy committee, and kind of what we're hoping to do. Because everything we're doing now is helping us prepare for the next charter renewal, which is going to be in three years.

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Shannon Hillman:

Right. And all the more reason, Tasha, for me to do those comparisons, so thank you.

Michele Hannagan:

That's what I was going to say, yep. Tasha's suggestion is going to really help.

Shannon Hillman:

[crosstalk 01:38:25] Yeah, I'll just make sure to add an extra page and I'll be sure to show that in November. I think that's a great idea.

Shannon Hillman:

So we did this table last year also. This is the academic supports that we are providing our students that are sort of beyond what's general, the general education piece. I do argue with the state about the levels of support. So 504 plans are not listed with the state, it's only students with IEPs, which just doesn't feel right. However, they attribute former students with disabilities, or former students who qualified for English language services. So I have those percentages listed, but this is a slightly inflated percentage overall than what the state would identify as our percentage, if that makes sense.

Shannon Hillman:

So right now we have 8% students with IEPs, that is a bit less than last year, 0.7%. former students with IEPs, we're down to 1% now. A lot of those students graduated, which is great, but we don't have those percentages anymore. 504 plans also have gone down, but our English language learners have gone up from 2.9 to 4%. So we're making some gains there. I know of one student that is in the referral process right now for IEPs. I also know that our intervention team is so much stronger than it ever has been. So I imagine that we'll be able to identify students a lot quicker too, and get them through the process more successfully if they do indeed need an IEP. But it could be to our disadvantage, because we might be so great at accelerating these students that they might not qualify. So we'll just have to see where the chips land with that. But those are our percentage. I hope you can see that okay.

Jess Wanner:

Shannon, how long does it typically take for the district to decide on an IEP from the moment that you recommend a child that has it?

Shannon Hillman:

So this particular referral process that I'm speaking of, I think will be completed in 60 days. It happens to be a child that's in a suburb, so it feels faster than RCSD usually is. They do have... It's something like 30 days to respond, and then I think they have like 60 days or something to get the testing done and to have a CSE date. I could be wrong about that.

Jess Wanner:

I know that that's what it was prior, but they never fell in those 90 days. Though district didn't [inaudible 01:41:18] always like six months to a year. So that I'm curious with our numbers changing, not that there's always correlates, but sometimes it does. In kindergarten, first grade, like how... Would you

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expect, looking at these numbers, that these will actually jump next year, compared to what they look like right now?

Shannon Hillman:

I guess it's possible. The other problem is that we do have some students that we are concerned about, but they are at the kindergarten and first grade level. And generally districts do not classify children that young. So we have to have a few more years under our belt to say, look, we've got all this data to show that they really do qualify. And then they tend to get classified more like second, third grade. So maybe we have the majority of our... We have a lot of IEPs right now in our second grade. And there's a lot of services just overall that happens to be for whatever reason a heavier year. But I don't know. We have some eyes on a few kindergartners, just because we think that could happen, but we don't think it's going to happen soon. So I don't know. I don't have a good answer, sorry.

Shannon Hillman:

I think this is my last... Yeah, this is my last page. So this is just open to any other comments or things you would like to see for November, besides some comparisons with Monroe County and RCSD?

Michele Hannagan:

I just want to reiterate that I'm not necessarily waiting until that November meeting, but to keep that free flow of conversation with the advocacy committee and Deb Hamner, that we can be really feeding the information and being able to incorporate that into how we're moving forward with the strategic planning and that work.

Jess Wanner:

Michelle, we have that first meeting in early November. We can definitely bring it up with Deb then too.

Michele Hannagan:

Awesome.

Ivelisse Gonzalez:

I just want to make a quick comment that it has to do with this, but not... Well, you decide if it fits completely has to do with it or not. But when Shannon was presented this information, it came to my mind that there is a possibility that to have some outreach done out there, that we could diversify our student body. There is an opportunity to do outreach at Sundays at the Plaza. It's a brand new International Plaza that was opened this past week on Clinton Avenue, right where Clinton and Irondequoit meet. They're having vendors come in, and they already have their specific vendors for merchandise, but they do have the opportunity for organizations to go and have a table open and share information, do giveaways and do this type of things for the community.

Ivelisse Gonzalez:

The process is very, very easy. I just completed the process for [inaudible 00:08:30], a coalition that I work with. Because you guys are a nonprofit organization, we would... There's really not a fee. Because it's school-based, it's not a fee that you guys have to pay. And I just wanted to throw it out there that this could be a possibility, although we know that we are on COVID, and we don't have a lot of tabling

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events. I just wanted to throw it out there that there could be the possibility within the next three weeks to do something like that.

Michele Hannagan:

Thank you.

Ivelisse Gonzalez:

And I'm more than willing to share all of that information, send it to Shannon if you guys want it.

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah. Thank you very much, Ivelisse, I love that.

Michele Hannagan:

Even better, Evalise, would you be willing to represent us? And that'd be a great opportunity, not to put you on the spot, but that sounds amazing. It does. Sounds great.

Speaker 10:

I could do it. I love a tabling event. I always say, give this girl a table and I'll be happy for days.

Michele Hannagan:

All right. Maybe you and Shannon could work offline on that. Because anything that is going to... I just think it's a great idea. So, all right. I'm going to move us along. I'm watching the time.

Shannon Hillman:

I'm sorry. Michelle, can I just quick give like two comments about attendance real quick? Is that okay?

Michele Hannagan:

You can. Of course.

Shannon Hillman:

That was also part of the agenda.

Michele Hannagan:

I know the attendance is awesome. Oh, sorry. I didn't mean to steal your thunder.

Shannon Hillman:

So the attendance is awesome. And you can read this at your leisure, it's really fun. This is a huge memo that was sent out around attendance. We wanted to be as specific as possible so families really understood what attending meant at our school. There has been a lot of like questions from the staff, from myself, from families around attendance and how this works, especially because we have kids attending in all different ways. Virtual learners, hybrid, in-person four days. It's really tricky, a very tricky part of what we're doing. So we wanted to make it as specific as possible. And knowing that this feels

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cold, I guess is the best word. And so we've been behind the scenes working with lots of families to make sure that they're getting what they needed in order to be able to feel successful around this.

Shannon Hillman:

However, we've had some really good systems put in place around attendance. And so therefore the other piece of paper that you might want to look at is the September attendance report, which shows our percentages of attending for all of the month of September, and that is completely caught up. So Christen, our new everything, our new person who answers the phone and handles attendance, does the sort of behind the scenes work to catch up, especially those who are remote learners or virtual learners, to make sure that it's all correct in our attendance records.

Shannon Hillman:

And so this is what we've got so far for the first month of September. It's a pretty close number. It's about two percentage points off, we're usually around 97% attending. And then along with that, teachers and our social emotional team and Christen have been working behind the scenes to check in with families who have more frequent situations of partial day or tardy or something where we can try to help them get themselves caught up or be named as attending fully. So I wanted to make sure that I shared that. I can see chatbox keeps popping up and I don't have it in front of me. So let me just take a quick look.

Shannon Hillman:

Okay. It looks like we have one little error somewhere around first grade. So thanks, Maggie. We'll fix that. Other than that, are there any questions about attendance for now?

Michele Hannagan:

Alrighty. Thank you, Shannon. Thank you for that School Leader report. It's a very exciting. And when we get to the open comment section, I'd actually love to just hear a little bit from you and the teachers about how you feel things are going, but let's save that and get through the dishwasher and the insurance.

Shannon Hillman:

Okay.

Michele Hannagan:

I'm thinking we need a dishwasher, so...

Shannon Hillman:

Yeah. So when we had made the agenda, I had mixed up numbers and went back to our new accounting manual and saw that we really don't need the board to approve the dishwasher. So this is a quick update. The dishwasher is totally kaput. It has been since the beginning of the year, we've had someone come out and take a look and try to bring it back to life. And he said, it is possible. It's six years old, which does not feel like that old, but [crosstalk 01:49:50]

Michele Hannagan:

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So Shannon, I'm going to interrupt you and tell you, you don't need to tell us about the dishwasher. Just go buy it, do whatever you got to do. We don't need to approve it. You're good.

Shannon Hillman:

We're buying the dishwasher.

Michele Hannagan:

Okay. Moving on.

Shannon Hillman:

And we got 3 quotes. That's all I was going to say. It's really exciting. Okay. So insurance. Insurance is not changing as far as going with Hanover over Philadelphia. It did increase in total of just about 8%, which feels like a big hike, but Tammy... And actually I put the email thread in the drive. So you're welcome to take a look at it at your leisure. Tammy explained why it hiked up. She said, it's like a nationwide thing that's happening with insurance, mostly due to COVID, stock market, all sorts of that kind of stuff. So it still feels like it's the right move, and she said, it's still significantly better than Philadelphia, which is where we were before. So our plan is to Renew. Just wanted to give that information for the minutes for us to say that we're moving on with our insurance. That's it see? Under seven minutes.

Michele Hannagan:

Nicely done. All right. Well then, I am going to officially open up the floor for public comment. And as I was making a note of, and also want to just call on Jessica because she's thinking the same thing. I would love to hear, I'm sure other board members would be interested in hearing from our teachers and Shannon and Maureen. How are you feeling? Give us a sort of pulse on how you're feeling about things.

Michele Hannagan:

I won't call on anybody. I just opened it up.

Becki Mason:

I don't know. I feel like the kids are happy. There's joy in the classrooms. I mean, I can speak just for my classroom, my co-teacher and I really wanted to make sure we didn't lose a lot of the aspects of EL and like inquiry learning and crew work. And so we've been working hard to try to do that, even though we only have the kids two days a week, or we have kids who are all virtual, been trying to keep that EL part of it going. I think I'm tired. The staff members are tired. It's a lot of work, I feel like, to plan... Because really we're planning for the kids who are in the classroom, the kids who are home for their two days, and the kids who are all virtual. So some days I've taught like three math lessons, all in different areas, spots, to three different groups of kids. And that's overwhelming, but we're doing it.

Becki Mason:

How about you, Maggie?

Maggie Deutschbein:

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It's okay. The part where we're actually at school with kids is the easiest part. It's all of the other hours that are happening outside of that, that are really challenging. What we are trying to do is do three people's jobs as one person. And there's three people's jobs for each of the teachers who's in the classroom. So it's not like we can share out amongst ourselves. And that's with all of the incredible support that's coming from the administrative staff, and the intervention staff, and the support from our teaching assistants who are doing work outside of their time at school.

Maggie Deutschbein:

And I second a lot of what Becki said about the preparation piece and having to keep track of things that are in a lot of different places at different times. It's been logistically very challenging, and it's difficult right now to look at where the kids are at academically, because it can feel kind of overwhelming. When really the most important piece of what we're feeling we need to do right now is make sure that school is safe and fun, which I think holding onto EL roots and what makes an expedition unique, that helps to keep that. So there's a lot to keep track of and it's very difficult.

Michele Hannagan:

Thank you, Maggie and, and Becki, I'm grateful for your honesty and your sharing.

Shannon Hillman:

Do you want to share, Maureen?

Maureen:

I do. The only thing I have to say is, thank goodness for Shannon. Not only is she handling a pandemic and holding up our incredibly hardworking teaching staff, but the things that we have to do to keep the doors open our business surviving is really incredible. The things that she... The time and the effort and the things that we have to do, and the hoops we have to go through just to keep the doors open. I don't know if anybody else could handle it with such grace. So thank you, Shannon.

Shannon Hillman:

Thanks, Maureen. I'm so appreciative of Becki and Maggie just being transparent and honest, because I know that this is super, super hard. We've tried really hard to, as Maggie shared, we've tried really hard to provide as much support as possible knowing that this is a really nearly impossible job. But knowing that if we go back to the kids, the students really are happy. There's just been a lot of joy, especially around the kids that have been able to be at school. And I think we're figuring it out, hopefully with our virtual learners. That's been like a winding road, trying to make sure that they are feeling just as included. But it feels like we're somewhere than we were on September 2nd. We're six weeks in now, we just did a big sort of six week check-in across the board with the intervention team and the arts, and it feels like we are moving forward. It's just like little baby steps towards making this work for everyone. And we still are, knock on every piece of wood, COVID free. So that's really good news too.

Michele Hannagan:

Do you ever get sick of me telling you how awesome you are, Shannon? I mean, this [crosstalk 01:57:06].

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Shannon Hillman:

You can stop. You can tell the teachers [inaudible 01:57:08]

Michele Hannagan:

Well, they're also awesome. And I know that teachers feel this way, like you can't have a successful organization without a leader who's organized and committed. And the way that you support your teachers and staff and parents and students and the board, by the way, it is noteworthy. And it absolutely bears calling out. It really does. So I think we learned this somewhere along the line, and some guiding principles about gratitude. I don't know, maybe I'm making that up.

Shannon Hillman:

Thank you.

Michele Hannagan:

You're welcome. And I don't know if anybody else wants to chime in, but I continue to feel so grateful for the teachers. And my heart just goes out to you, even though my child is long graduated, I can hear the commitment and the passion and the feeling and the struggle. And really, I just bow to all of you, and what you're doing for our kids and the future of our community. [crosstalk 01:58:19]

Jess Wanner:

I have questions of the teachers. First of all, amazing. Like I have two kids, and it's really, really gone smoothly. And anytime, you know the hiccup, it gets rectified pretty quickly. So thank you. Is this truly sustainable if we're not able to get back into the school as a whole group? And depending on how COVID goes, do you think this is sustainable for the whole year, as a teacher?

Maggie Deutschbein:

No.

Becki Mason:

I mean, I can say on my end, at least I'm finally understanding where I'm supposed to be, and what time. So that's a celebration. I felt like for the first three weeks I was looking at my co-teacher saying, "Am I supposed to be on Zoom? Am I supposed to be teaching somebody right now?" Because I couldn't get it straight, but at least I had my schedule straight. As far as the workload, it is a lot. I don't know. I mean, obviously it's something as a teacher that we'll do, but I don't know how sustainable it is for our mental health. So I don't know. And Maggie, you said no right away, so...

Maggie Deutschbein:

It's completely unsustainable. The amount of tears that have been shed by myself and the people I have talked to, who I work with, the people who are in different grade levels, it's ridiculous. And I know that it's not... There's a mirror of that for parents. This is just as hard for them, and just as unsustainable, That may be different family to family, but I think that on average, based on what we're seeing and even for the kids, that that virtual piece is so different than what they're used to, that for some it's starting now that that's breaking down. Being on the computer is boring. It's not sustainable. As it is right now,

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this is not a model to be done all year and not expect to see people, kids, parents, and teachers crumbling.

Shannon Hillman:

I would say though that it would not be sustainable if we were fully virtual, either.

Becki Mason:

No, that's what I was going to say. I would take this over being totally virtual, for sure. [crosstalk 02:00:40]

Shannon Hillman:

And I'm pretty positive it wouldn't be sustainable if we were all in school either, because we would be split into two rooms. And that would mean that our support system is completely spread across the campus. So I'm not sure that there is a good situation to be in right now, no matter which way we, yeah.

Becki Mason:

I agree.

Shannon Hillman:

So that's the unfortunate thing. Like we could say, no, this is not sustainable, but I don't have a back... Like I don't think any of these are a good backup plan. So I think we're just continuing to, knowing that this is sort of working, and then what new things can we put into place to make sure that systems are even stronger than they are now? Or what can we lift off of teachers' plates so that it's a little less? And so we're constantly thinking about that, especially the intervention team. But as Maggie said, even with all of these supports in place, it's pretty hard to figure out what more we can do to make it more sustainable. Especially because there's not very many schools that are doing what we're doing. So I think that's hard too.

Michele Hannagan:

Yeah. I think that's really, really important feedback and I'm really glad that you said so, Maggie, and being really transparent. And I think it behooves the board to continue to talking about this, and figuring out... I guess I'm wondering, Shannon and the board, how do we continue to ask this question in a parallel process of saying, is there more to be done? Maybe the answer is no, there just simply isn't, and we don't know, but I think we need to keep asking this particularly. I know you're thinking about this as you think about next semester, and there's a lot unknown. We don't know about a vaccine. So I think it's important that we keep listening and just really make the mark of sustainability and mental health.

Shannon Hillman:

It's just about time for the renewal committee to come back together, so that's actually on my list to send an email out tomorrow.

Michele Hannagan:

Great.

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Shannon Hillman:

So I think that's going to be the hard questions we're going to be asking, and we'll make sure to report back in November as well.

Michele Hannagan:

I'm really grateful for the conversation. I'm aware of the time, we're over, but I thought it was important to not cut off conversation. Is there anything that anyone else wants to sort of ask or comment, for the good of the order, before we conclude?

Allison Shultes:

Just a quick question. Did Tracy have diversity committee updates, or did I completely zone out during that chunk of the conversation?

Traci Terrance:

No. You skipped it, but I would let it go.

Allison Shultes:

You're good?

Michele Hannagan:

Oh, Tracy. I am so sorry.

Traci Terrance:

Oh, it's all right. We're-

Michele Hannagan:

No, it's really not.

Traci Terrance:

We're okay. We're meeting tomorrow. We've kept up every two week meeting frequency, and that will be re-evaluated at the end of this month. We asked if every two weeks was too much for folks, and folks said, nope, let's keep going. So doing a pretty good job of just balancing kind of our own personal journey and the racial equity identity stuff. And also trying to figure out how to be helpful to the schools. So there's some energy around partnering with Erica Dooley, who is doing a segment during community circle every six weeks, I think, Shannon. And so looking at a partnership there and just moving forward.

Michele Hannagan:

Thank you, Traci. And my apologies for forgetting, please don't let me get away with that again. We are losing folks, they're sending messages in, so I'm going to call for a motion to adjourn before we lose enough voting members to actually adjourn. Otherwise we'll be stuck here all night. Just kidding.

Michele Hannagan:

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So I'll make a motion to adjourn our meeting.

Traci Terrance::

Second.

Michele Hannagan:

All right. Thanks. Is that Traci?

Traci:

That's me.

Michele Hannagan:

All right, all those in favor of adjourning, say aye. Opposed, abstentions. Everyone have a great night. Annemarie and Shannon, if you guys can hang for a second. Thank you so much, everybody.

Traci:

Bye.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [02:05:32]