

**Transcript of Board of Education Meeting  
May 26, 2021**

Mr. Buono:

Welcome to the Board meeting for East Greenbush Central School District for May 26th. Call the meeting to order at 7 P.M. Tonight's meeting, all members are present in-person, except Ms. Curtin and Ms. Muth will not be here this evening. And with that, please rise and join me for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Group:

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Mr. Buono:

Thank you, everyone. So, our first order of business is to then hear from our student council from Columbia High School. We have Katie and Ryan. Welcome guys and I'll turn it over to you. Good to see you.

Katie Asenbauer:

Hello. Good evening. So, today we had a meeting after school to discuss our class and student council elections for the 2021-2022 school year, and it looks like we're going to have a lot of people running for positions. Way more than this year for next year, which is great because they'll definitely be a busy one, getting back to our normal events and traditions. So, the official election will be two weeks from today, and then we will have the results to share with everyone.

Mr. Buono:

Awesome. Thank you, Katie.

Ryan Seely:

Today we will discuss our final arrangements for the Columbian Awards ceremony. We'll be recording the ceremony next Wednesday, June 2nd, and we have a group of juniors and seniors presenting for the awards show. The awards will then be given out to the winners on the following day. That's all we have.

Mr. Buono:

Great. All right. Thanks, Ryan. Thanks, Katie. Have a great night. You're welcome to stay on if you want, but I'm sure you have other things to do, right? Homework, right? All right.

Ryan Seely:

Thank you.

Katie Asenbauer:

Thank you.

Mr. Buono:

Have a good one. Next order of business for the agenda is the approval of the draft minutes for the public hearing dated May 4th, 2021. Any revisions comments on the minutes, the public hearing? Seeing none in the motion to approve those. JoAnn and second, Jennifer. All those in favor? Next, we had the draft minutes for May 4th. Regular meeting. Any comments or questions revisions on the minutes? Seeing none in the motion to approve of that. John, second, Mark. All those in favor? Approved.

Mr. Buono:

So the next thing on our item is the board forum. This is for the public. We did have to change the meeting format a little bit, so we're trying a little bit different agenda, see how this one goes. If it goes well over the next couple weeks. So with the board forum, I'd like to... Jennifer, any comments at all?

Ms. Massey:

No, thank you.

Mr. Buono:

Michele, anything? John, you're good? Mark, anything? JoAnn? And Frank?

Mr. Yeboah:

No, sir.

Mr. Buono:

Very good. There will be a second public forum, Board forum later on after we get through our business tonight. For the public forum, I will read the public content. Residents, students, employees, and business representatives of the East Greenbush Central School District may address the Board on matters concerning programs and/or operations of the district, other than matters involving personnel. Members of the Board do not directly respond to citizen concerns during the Public Forum. If a response is appropriate either the President or Superintendent will contact the individual in the near future. Those persons wishing to address the Board will be recognized by the chair of the meeting and should state for the record their name and address, or affiliation with the District or business. While the Board does not wish to infringe upon free speech protections, it must be stressed that the "Visitors' Forum" is not deemed to be an "open forum". The Board president will conduct the forum for the orderly and efficient operation of Board business. In addition, any remarks which may be considered defamatory or stigmatizing are prohibited and will be declared out of order. We have our email set up. Linda do we have anything?

Ms. Wager:

There are no public comments.

Mr. Buono:

Okay. For our public there is a second opportunity. If you hear the rest of the agenda, to submit email comments to the Board. We're having public forum number two. With that I will hand it over to our Superintendent with Reports and Presentations.

Mr. Simons:

Thank you, Mr. Buono. Good evening, everybody. Welcome members of the Board of the Education, our administrative team, and those members of the community who are participating in the live stream of our board meeting. Tonight, we have a special report, on an annual basis representatives of the leadership team at Questar come to present to our Board of Education. We are one of 23 component districts within the Questar, and we have a great relationship with our Questar BOCES. And we also have a number of programs and services for students that we participated in through Questar as well as administrative services. So at this point I'm going to introduce Questar Deputy Superintendent Harry Hadjioannou and the Chief Academic Officer Anthony Taibi. Gladys Cruz could not be here tonight due to a personal matter. So, Harry or Anthony?

Harry Hadjioannou:

I do want to send Gladys regards. Unfortunately, she had a death in the family, so she couldn't be here tonight. Anthony is going to tell you a little bit about what's going on with Questar II BOCES. We have some new and exciting instruction programs that we're introducing.

Anthony Taibi:

All right. Good evening, everyone. I would like to extend my thanks to President Buono, Superintendent Simons, and the entire Board of Education for welcoming us this evening to talk a little bit about Questar III and our programs. Starting out, at the request of the Board of Education, we were asked to speak about the PTECH and Early College High School program that we are starting this fall in partnership with all of our component districts and Hudson Valley Community College.

Anthony Taibi:

So just a little bit about P-TECH and Early College High School, the models are part of an RFP that the State put out. We are members of cohort five for both P-TECH and Early College High School. And the model is to permit students to complete their high school graduation requirements, along with earning college credits and in the PTECH program, completing an associate's degree. When the RFP came out, we applied for initially the Early College High School grant. And then before we found out about Early College High School, we applied for the P-TECH grant. We're very happy to find out that we were awarded both of these grants, which was both challenging and exciting. But the goal of both programs is to increase the high school graduation and post-secondary degree completion rates of those that are historically underrepresented in that secondary level.

Anthony Taibi:

So some of the details of the programs, the Early College High School program is more of a traditional four-year program, and students earn between 24 and 60 college credits as part of that program. And then the P-TECH program students earn in excess of 60 college credits, and an Associates of Applied Sciences. In both cases, both of these programs are offered and the college credits are at no cost to families. So one of the features of both programs is the workplace visits, the internships, and being first in line for job opportunities. We have four program pathways, which I'll talk about in-depth a little bit later. But the first one is computer information systems and cyber security. Next, we have engineering technology focusing on civil engineering and architecture, environmental protections, and then finally health sciences.

Anthony Taibi:

So we are here in Rensselaer County, but the program serves all seven counties within both of the Questar III BOCES and Capital Region BOCES for a total of 46 school districts. So we have both IHE, which is an Institute of higher education partner, which is Hudson Valley Community College and industry partners are very important to this program. We've identified two already with the Tech Valley Center of Gravity, which have already been great partners in our development. And then also the Artificial Intelligence Center for Excellence. And then we've mentioned Hudson valley, right?

Anthony Taibi:

So both of the programs are going to be located on the Hudson Valley Community College campus. They have identified a building right there on the campus, which was a former Center for Advanced Manufacturing building the Lang building. So we'll be the sole occupants of that building, and they're doing renovations to both the first and second floor in preparation for our arrival. So students earn as part of the program coursework and college coursework in conjunction with their high school coursework as early as ninth grade. In the case of ninth grade, students will be taking a college forum class, which permits them the ability to explore the program pathways and get acclimated to the college environment and some of the things that they will need to do to be successful at the college level.

Anthony Taibi:

So what is the focus of these programs? And there's a great deal of thought that went into the development of the pathways. A lot of conversation amongst this hearing committee to identify pathways that would be broad enough to attract a variety of students. So we've identified four pathways. There are three pathways within P-TECH and two pathways within Early College High School. You'll notice that computer information systems is identified in both the P-TECH and the early college high school pathway, creating additional flexibilities for a student who knows they want to go on to college beyond their Early College High School participation. And those that maybe want to enter directly into the workforce after completing their associate's degree environment. Engineering technology is a P-TECH pathway along with environmental protections, focusing on energy management is the other two P-TECH pathways.

Anthony Taibi:

The second pathway Early College High School is health sciences. And I'll talk a little bit more about that, but the health sciences pathways fields like respiratory therapy, radiologic technology, or dental hygiene, all of which have a great forecast of job growth. So when we think about identifying the pathways for these programs, forecasts of job growth was a huge factor in that. It really is pointless to have flexibility and a broad range of pathways if there isn't a prospect of gainful employment after they complete the program. So when we were identifying the pathways, we wanted to look for pathways that had a large percentage of job growth within the next four to six years. So first web development forecasted to grow by 20% by 2028. Civil engineering technology forecasted to grow by 18% by 2026, and environmental science or environmental service technician forecast to grow by 17% by 2026. And then health sciences has some of our largest forecasts of job growth within the capital region, anywhere between 22% and 30% forecast of job growth. So definitely great opportunities for students as they complete the program.

Anthony Taibi:

So the programs have a lot of similarities, and I just want to go through some of them with you. Both of the programs, like I said or mentioned, are located at the Hudson Valley Community College campus,

and no cost to families. They're available to students across our entire region. Our industry partners are vital in this, and while we've identified two already, we know that we have additional partners that we have to identify each of the program pathways. Each of the programs are fully aligned with Hudson Valley Community Colleges' AAS degrees. They are, as I mentioned, focused on in-demand jobs and career fields. The dual enrollment coursework, begins no later, it must by the grant, no later than tenth grade, in our case, for beginning in the ninth grade level at one course. Students have the ability to articulate to more than 50 colleges through the partnership with Hudson Valley Community College. Workplace visits, internships, students seeing first in line for job opportunities are key features of both of the programs.

Anthony Taibi:

And then courses taught by both high school faculty and college faculty. One of the things that we've talked about in our forums with parents and students is the location on the college campus, and that is something that is somewhat concerning. I know, as a parent myself, I be a little bit worried about that. But one of the things that we've we really worked to ensure is to make sure that we have the separation on the college campus when we want it, but also the access when we need it to the coursework and the faculty and guest speakers, things like that. So by being in the Lang building, we are in our own environment, and students in the ninth and tenth grade level will stay in that building for all of their coursework. They will not be venturing out to sitting in a college class, not until they're eleventh graders. So, yeah, we felt that was very important. That's definitely something that we talked a lot about with this hearing committee all throughout the planning processes, really trying to ensure that in the early years that we're doing everything in house, in that building and keeping our rising eighth graders in an environment that is isolated from the rest of the college population.

Anthony Taibi:

So key benefits, minimum of 24 college credits, and in the case of the P-TECH program, in excess of 63 credits for some of the pathways. It combines the best elements of high school, college, and work-based learning all in one experience. It is a rigorous program., and we want to make sure that we are providing the proper support for our students in order for them to be successful. They are going to be earning a number of college credits very early on in their high school career. We need to make sure they're set up for success. There is a strong emphasis on project-based learning within both of the programs. And if you're not promoting project-based learning, it's really experiential learning through doing projects and not in addition to the coursework, but as part of the coursework. So you're immediately applying the different concepts and skills that you're learning in your subject areas into a project-based environment.

Anthony Taibi:

You mentioned the work site visits and workplace learning experiences. That's another advantage of being on the college campus, the access to the faculty to come into our building in the early years and for our students to experience some of those opportunities within the college campus. So who is a successful student? We really want to make sure that we're ensuring that it is more of a decision of the student and identify whether or not these characteristics mesh with who they are as a student. We need our students to be motivated to explore new and exciting ways to learn. We need students who are going to be able to, for one, that they're interested in the program pathways, and that they're able to succeed in a non-traditional classroom setting. As I mentioned, the project-based learning experience is different, and we want to make sure that students are acclimated to that so they can be successful.

Anthony Taibi:

It is a highly collaborative environment in the program. We want to make sure students are ready and willing to do that, and they want to have a different type of high school experience. So when I mentioned that it is more of a student looking at the programs, hearing about our high school experience and then making sure that that is a fit for who they are as a student. That's our goal. We want to make sure that we are not excluding anyone, that we are inclusive of all students if they want to proceed and pursue this pathway. So important dates and we are well on our way and almost completely through our planning year. And that will conclude in August of this year. And we are getting ready for implementation. Students will be arriving, starting with the summer bridge program in July, and then starting with our first cohort of students in September. All right. I'm going to turn it over to Harry at this point.

Mr. Buono:

Let me just pause for any questions on the P-TECH or Early College High School. Board members, do you have any questions? All right. Straightforward. Please participate in it that way it might work, and it's a really exciting opportunity... Jackie Naval as a sponsoring district and superintendent to help guide that process. Really, it is such a wonderful opportunity for us, and a first, I think, to be on a college campus.

Anthony Taibi:

Just to mention quickly the our P-TECH Early College High School is only the second in New York state to be on a college campus and the first outside of New York city. We are also too, the best that we can tell, the first of its kind to combine both Early College High School and P-TECH in one program. So we are doing things a little bit differently, and we are cutting edge. I do want to just say thank you very much to East Greenbush school district. You've been great partners with us throughout this entire process. The planning and the planning process, Superintendent Simons has been a huge part of that and had a great voice in those discussions. Thank you.

Harry Hadjioannou:

No presentation would be complete tonight without talking about the pandemic. But I would say this, we know there was a huge student impact, a huge family impact, instructional impact. There's so many sides about the learning impact that the pandemic has created. I heard from Brown University that said most students are at least a few months to a year behind. And then I read from another one from a different company that said student will never recover learning gaps. So I will assure through the leadership of Superintendent Simons, and I will hope you will request that in all our superintendents in this region. We're working very hard to make sure that learning gap is going be very temporary. That's why we're rolling out the kind of programs that Anthony described earlier in such detail.

Harry Hadjioannou:

So, what we have done? We have built a lot of partnerships with the counties to try and help us through this pandemic and also the New York State Health Department. We do meet on a weekly basis, twice a week, with our superintendents and our business contributors just to coordinate a kind of habit, coordinated regional response when it comes to closures, reopening, the challenges that were facing day in and day out. Testing. That was a big issue. Even testing kids for a while was very very difficult. But we stuck together and we worked together to go through this pandemic. I will say this. Over at Questar, we have focused for a really really long time about building an organization that can absorb and function, can handle emergencies. When we were doing our initial planning and designing and

redesigning our organization, I never I thought I would be dealing with a pandemic. I thought I was going to dealing with terrorist attack, with some kind of weather conditions, et cetera.

Harry Hadjioannou:

Here came the pandemic. I think that's where we tested our system, and that's when our system quite frankly helped us through this emergency. A few years ago, I remember I did a presentation reminding regarding our health and safety services, and you have trusted us with your business. And that was a huge change for business at the time. And I'm glad to say that we're provided a lot of services to this business when it comes to health and safety. Quite frankly, I think we were able to earn your trust, especially the way we have dealt with this pandemic. Now, what we have done, it's like I here with this presentation. I kind of summarized talk more about the pandemic. I did summarize the services that you're currently purchasing for us. I guess this is just a sample. We have over 300 different services. These are some of the ones the we were planning on using technical education and special education. Those are big components. We purchased approximately \$5,000,000 worth of services from us. Two million is special education services. The rest is other BOCES services from [inaudible 00:23:49] 375 that calculates [inaudible 00:23:52] post-employment benefits to P-Tech. So there's huge variety of services.

Harry Hadjioannou:

So your BOCES aid is 61%. However, when you look at your costs you get back about \$0.54 on the dollar because obviously there's costing they're not BOCES aidable. For example, property of the districts or salaries over \$50,000 or something like that. The next slide talks about some of other programs that are available. I just want to stress the part that P-TECH was listed there because that's a new program. Quite frankly, your district has been a little making sure that program was established. Jeff worked with the committee that kind of created the vision for that program. We went ahead and applied to the state. Got the money. There's an immense amount of work to make this thing take place. Quite frankly, we got great partners because I know Hudson Valley Community College invested a tremendous amount of funds in infrastructure. Make sure that we convert that space into our students. So that's great new thing for our region.

Harry Hadjioannou:

I also like to talk a little bit of give you an update Rensselaer Education Center revitalization plan. We've been talking for this about this project for a number of years. I do recall it was like three year or three phases program. Two summers ago, we did phase one, which was side work. We improved the bus loop, the parking lot. We created a new entrance and exit there. Other passivity. We also improved the drainage. So that was two summer ago. Last summer, amidst through the pandemic, we went ahead and completed phase two. We did a complete guttering up job for about half of the building. This summer, we're going to do the other half, and then that's it. We've completed that location. That's a project that's been in the works for more than a decade. When [inaudible 00:26:37] 16 years ago, we used to run down it all the time go, "Oh what we will do Rensselaer Education Center?" I'm just glad that we're bringing that discussion to a plan.

Harry Hadjioannou:

I got some pictures here of the first place. That is the old building. That's the new bus loop. You can see the new parking lot and entrance loop that we created, and that happened two summers ago. I also have a little video that shows what we did last summer. I just hope the embedded links are going to work.

Harry Hadjioannou:

No? Let me try from here. All right. Well, sometimes it works. Actually that's the first time I haven't been able to play it but anyway. Basically, what we've done is we took out the building. We rearranged some of the classrooms in that building. We replaced the flooring. We replaced the ceilings. We insulated the ceilings. We reconfigured classrooms, bathrooms. We, for example, our car program got brand equipment. Freezers. Coolers. We have the space so we has opened new equipment and etcetera for the students. So it has been a busy summer last year, but it's going to be pretty busy this year also. But we're coming to the end of that particular project. So thank you for your support because without your support we couldn't have that. Then, lastly, I also want to thank you for approving our administrative budget, it was unanimously approved by all our district components. You are going to see that...

PART 1 OF 5 ENDS [00:29:04]

Harry Hadjioannou:

You are going to see that there's a slight increase on your share. It's only because there was an increase in the expenditure amount. You are one of a handful of districts that has seen an increase in their student enrollment. In our region, those 23 school districts, we lost about 260 students. So when you saw everyone's enrollments together. There were quite a few districts that lost students, there were quite a few... Again, I think you East Greenbush has the most gain so to speak. That's all that I had. I don't know if you have any questions for me or Anthony.

Mr. Buono:

Thank you, Harry. Any questions, Board members, on any information that was shared?

Mr. Buono:

Oh, Jennifer, yes.

Ms. Massey:

I do. Can you talk a little bit about the grant writing component and what things that you might be offering to districts or what you could provide to districts? Especially with funding shrinking.

Harry Hadjioannou:

And we do have a grant writer in house. We also have contracts with a number of outside grant writers. We realize on a project by project basis. It's part of the administrative project. We do have some basic grant supplements we provide. So for example, we do research as far as what grants are out there in terms of federal government or besides the state, et cetera. So we kind of share that information. But then the district wants<sup>3</sup> to write specific grants, then we have in house staff, but we also have other consultants that we utilize on this.

Mr. Buono:

Thanks, Jennifer. Any other questions for Harry?

Mr. Simons:

Well, I want to thank Harry and Anthony for everything that they've done during this... Well, everything, again, particularly since last March, we really... Although we don't meet in person very often, we've



really gotten to know each other within our Questar BOCES quite well. As Harry mentioned, we meet twice a week, and sometimes three depending on the situation. I will say that a couple of things. I think in the decision that we made to switch to the health safety risk management culture could not have been a better timed, given the needs that we've experienced over the last 15 months. So I think that's turned out to be a very good shift. And I would agree with Harry's characterization that there are a number of services that we have been receiving from, from that service, that's have been very, very beneficial. Not only having Sam here two days a week, but also with Greg Hanson, really pulling everybody together and continuing to work with all of us on all of the State requirements, facilitating the county Department of Health meetings.

Mr. Simons:

Just checking in and making sure that we're doing everything in accordance with what's expected, as rules continue to change. It really turned out to be a very accessible service and a quality service. And I just want to say that I appreciate the board supporting that recommendation. The P-TECH grant, we're very excited about it. The Board and I, since the last few years have talked about making sure that the educational opportunities that we provide for the students provide multiple pathways. If they want to pursue a college degree, if they want to move into a technical field, if they want to start to think about what they want to do when they graduate from high school, and there's no better program designed to do those things and accomplish all those things than the early college high school and the P-TECH model. We've got nine kids, I think so far, who applied to the program. We don't have the most, I think we're close to having the most, Anthony?

Anthony:

The most.

Mr. Simons:

We have the most. We're hoping that as the students transition to that program, they'll really benefit from it. And I'm serving on the steering committee as was mentioned to make sure that we get that program off the ground successfully. So I'm very encouraged by it and excited about it and look forward to visiting in the fall. A couple of things that you did mention. Summer school initiative that we're putting together will be BOCES aidable for this summer. So we'll use monies from the general fund that we budgeted, but we'll get back that close to 51% or 52%, that Harry indicated, is our BOCES aid ratio. That will be not only beneficial from a revenue standpoint next year, but we're also part of the model is our teachers will get to collaborate to develop the curriculum for that program and the assessments for that program with teachers from other districts, which is always a very powerful experience. So Terry Bordell from Questar met with Jim today, and Linda today.

Mr. Dunn:

They finalized how to make sure that that process of claiming expenses will work. So there's a number of things that we're doing together and we'll continue to do together to continue to provide great services to the kids in the communities of East Greenbush. So I appreciate all that you're doing. And I'm sorry that Dr. Cruz couldn't be here so that we can thank her, but I think our relationship and our working relationship in terms of the programs that we're developing are really solid and moving down a very, very successful path.

Harry Hadjioannou:

Thank you, again. Thank you, Jeff. We want the silver lining in the COVID cloud is that we did get closer together as a region. We are working more closely together than we ever were. I think, quite frankly, that's the good product of COVID. So if there's any good news from the pandemic, that's it. But we'll continue with that and with more good things are going to come for East Greenbush School District.

Mr. Simons:

Thank you, Harry.

Mr. Dunn:

Sorry. I don't have a question, just to comment. Where we were and where we're going is great to see. The collaboration and some of the tensions that were here years ago, we've really moved past that. I know within our own group, it was a lot of discussion in your group. And I just want to, for you to go back and express to your folks and to Gladys, that we appreciate that because it truly demonstrates that we're all here and we're putting the students first. And I think that's what... if we can say anything about the relationship that East Greenbush has with Questar it is student driven and we put that back on track. That being said, you set the bar so high that we're really expecting even greater things next year. Thanks again. Please relay that to everyone else.

Harry Hadjioannou:

Thank you, thank you.

Mr. Simons:

Harry, don't feel bad. He says that to me every year .

Harry Hadjioannou:

(Laughter)

Mr. Buono:

Mark has a comment.

Mr. Mann:

Just being on Questar's board as well, I like to attest what Anthony and Harry has said. I went to that Rensselaer center before any of the projects started. And then we got a couple tours of it and it's phenomenal. I mean, it's just state of the art, it's beautiful. But I also get to see sitting in the Questar's board, our kids from East Greenbush and the successes that they're definitely having up in Questar in the double digits. It's a testament to these two gentleman, Gladys and all programs that Questar offers. And I'm so glad that we're really involved where we are with Questar. And just a little plug up there for Gladys. Gladys was chosen by the Albany Business Review as one of their 2021 Leaders in Diversity the other day. So that's a huge testament to her and everything she does over at Questar. So appreciate that. Anthony, Harry. I appreciate everything you guys do. Gladys, thank you.

Harry Hadjioannou:

Thank you.

Mr. Buono:

Thank you, Mark. And then really just to echo what John said. The range of opportunities that are available to students in this region and our district, in particular because we aim to serve all our families and all our communities in this district and give our students those opportunities to explore it, to find their path, and to be successful adults and go on to successful careers. College or right to high school to career or the military, and we want to provide... We do provide those opportunities for our children and our families. And I think that the things that Questar BOCES can do to help support those opportunities for kids and families in the region is important. And I know our children and our families have taken advantage of those opportunities to a great degree, and the P-TECH and ECHS is another example of expanding those opportunities for kids. And it's just great to see, and be partners on. Thank you. And I want to thank Mark for his service on the board of Questar.

Mr. Mann:

Over three years.

Mr. Buono:

All right. Thank you very much. We appreciate it, guys.

Harry Hadjioannou:

Thank you, folks.

Mr. Buono:

Have a great night.

Mr. Mann:

You too.

Harry Hadjioannou:

Okay.

Mr. Buono:

We do have a second presentation tonight. And lead by Mr. McHugh, is that correct ?

Mr. Dunn:

Mr. McHugh going present the completion of the grade two and grade three standards-based report cards project. Mr. McHugh.

Mr. McHugh:

I just want to give an update on our standards-based report cards. If you remember, we talked about this about two years ago, kindergarten and grade one, implementing standards-based report cards. Part of the board feedback was to make sure that we put something in place to review after the initial limitation. So I'll talk about that briefly. But a real quick timeline. Fall, 2018, we established a K-1 report card committee. It was formed. It had 10 teachers. Five kindergarten teachers, one from each of our elementary buildings. Five first grade teachers, one from each of our elementary buildings. In the fall of 2019, we piloted the new standards-based report card in K and grade one, and also in the fall of '19, we

established a grade two and a grade three report card committee. Again, making sure that we had one teacher brought from each of our five elementary buildings at both grade levels.

Mr. McHugh:

Fall of 2020, the new standards-based report cards in kindergarten, grade one were fully implemented. I just point out that it is PowerSchool, which means that right now with the adoption of the grades two and grade three standards-based report cards, K through 12 district wide, our report cards are on our student information system generated through PowerSchool. Spring 2021, we solicited feedback from our kindergarten and grade one teachers, so we brought them together. And I believe that was also a concern from our board when we first implemented that we wanted to make sure that we monitor it. We saw feedback and then we made the necessary changes. So based on the feedback that we received, and I'll talk about that a little bit more, it wasn't the report card in design, but it was just the rubric and the pacing. So each standards-based report cards, and I'll talk about that.

Mr. McHugh:

They also put the focus back on teaching and learning, but they also make sure that we are consistent in all five of our elementary buildings in regards to what we teach and when we teach it. The new standards-based report cards for grades two and three were completed this spring. They were presented the CCS on May 5th. And really, just a quick walkthrough on this. What really generated this, some deep discussions about the purpose of the grade and what follows after the grade. So what's the purpose of the grade? What follows after the grade? And who's the report card actually for? The report card is a communication tool to parents. To let parents know exactly how their child is progressing towards those standards. What should we be grading and what shouldn't we be grading? How consistent should grades be and grading be across time and across teachers? Meaning that if we look back at our old report cards, just to sick a letter grade, A, B, C, D, is an A in one teacher's classroom going to be an A in another teacher's classroom?

Mr. McHugh:

That's really important to really have that consistency. Do we have quality controls in place when it comes to grading? Do we have any district wide criteria that helps us with grading? And what criteria could be, should be used? In other words, is an A in mathematics in one class going to be an A another teacher's class at the same grade level? What do we currently base our grades on? Instructional resources, opinions, assessments, standards. How do we really come about what constitutes that final grade? So this generated a lot of deep professional dialogue. Do we currently grade and report on what we actually teach? Is teaching assessing and reporting currently aligned? And how difficult is it to currently defend your grades? Is there anything that would make it easier?

Mr. McHugh:

So when we think about the value of those parent teacher conferences, and really the emphasis should be on how the child's progressing towards those standards. Are we in a difficult situation at times justifying your grade when they asked what constituted that grade? So we're looking for more consistency. We talked about we really wanted. Then just to generate some discussion, letter grades, I made just general statements and then open it up just to get the conversation going. But letter grades don't break things down enough. I don't know what my job specifically needs to do in order to improve. For example, from a B to an A. So when you get that report card and you look at that grade, does it

really let you know what your child really needs to work on it in order to show that growth? Failure to give grades against the state standards is irresponsible.

Mr. McHugh:

So we have the state standards that are what we should be aligned to, and our teaching should be aligned to. Shouldn't effort and progress be more heavily weighted at first than simple academic achievement. You should utilize rubrics and give grades against all rubrics at the end of each market period. Rubric track progress over time against the standards. I don't think a week in the time that I've been in this position with for Mr. Shine, said he hasn't said the word rubric. So I'm pretty sure he uses rubrics at home. He's a rubric guy, but that's the power-

Mr. McHugh:

That's actually the power. That it is the rubrics that are really driving our report cards. And then the comment that I didn't teach that yet. Assessments should be based in terms of longer term learning goals versus grades that are just the average of recent quizzes, tests and projects. And that part that I didn't teach that yet, you're putting four or five teachers in the room together in the same building, and they didn't teach the same content, the same standards, that's problematic. And especially when we look at the number of students that relocate during a school year, from one of our elementary buildings to another elementary building. We had this situation where students might change schools right in the district and they already read that book, or they are already covered that math concept.

Mr. McHugh:

So this has really tightened that up quite a bit along with our mapping. Report [inaudible 00:46:00] should be honestly fair. An honest account of student's strengths and weaknesses against the standards, mindful of extenuating circumstances. To be credible, a grade, a judgment must be based on multiple and varied assessments. We're working towards this in our mapping. So we're working on developing consistent end of the unit assessments K through five. So all students are taking the same assessment. We're working on that even throughout the other grade levels. The high school, common midterms, those have been things that we've worked on.

Mr. McHugh:

Inter-rater reliability, measurable data, human judgments must be as objective as possible. Reliable. Objective is reliable, subjective bias can be good or bad. We just talked about these things. We talk about our older report cards. First of all, they weren't aligned to the standards. The process of actually completing the report card, variable. Grade three had a separate carbon copy form for special areas. So special area teacher, there were a hundred students in grade three, they were filling out a hundred carbon copy forms for art. That's all gone away. Don't allow our parents or our students to easily grasp the feedback we want to provide. And I talked about that. If you looked at the old report cards, there were a lot of keys. There was S, satisfactory, O, outstanding, check check, plus. You really had to spend a lot of time memorizing that key info without looking at the report card.

Mr. McHugh:

A few non-negotiables before we started our work. We wanted uniformity in the sense of, we are either going to go to stay with a traditional grade, or we were going to move to standards-based grading. Consistency in approach all five buildings. The critical steps, really important, is communication. Making sure that our principals were aware of the work that was being done, what our end goal was, what we

were working for, what the update, progress, faculty and staff, making sure that we had representation from all five buildings and making sure that those representatives were going back to the buildings and communicate with their grade level peers and colleagues, getting that feedback. Parents, we used the report card guide. So there's a specific report card guy that's been created for each of those grades. That tool is out on desk tops for open house, and teachers are walking parents through.

Mr. McHugh:

That was a big transition going from traditional grading to standards-based grading. We all remember how we were graded. We had the latter grades, we had numerical. So standards-based grading, new. I think a pilot helped quite a bit. And remember our kindergarten and first grade parents and students are accustomed to this now. So the transition to grades two and three, it was done in a good sequence. One, now two, three. Training and support. Our own data department, Tom Witherell, did a phenomenal job of training our teachers on how to use it through PowerSchool. So the actual rubrics are an add-on feature, customization in PowerSchool. Teachers are completing that rubric during the term, there's three terms in the elementary. When the marking period ends, those report cards are automatically generated. When it's parent teacher conference time, those teachers are sitting with parents with that report card out, but with the rubric out.

Mr. McHugh:

It's specifically for every entry in the report card, is a rubric entry describing what a level four is, describing what a level three is, describing what a level two, and a level one is. So there's transparency. Parents know exactly what child needs to be able to demonstrate, what they need to be able to do, in order to be at that level three or level four. We continue to monitor the roll out, and we revisit and we're responsive. We seek and respond to stakeholder feedback. If I can get a report card, can you pull one up for me, Peter?

Peter:

Grade one?

Mr. McHugh:

Yeah, that's fine. Can you pull up another? Either grade two or grade three?

Peter:

Yeah.

Mr. McHugh:

So here's a grade two report card. Term one, term two, term three. You can see, right here, reads and identifies sight words. There's areas where it is... Can you roll it up just a little bit? You can see here, here's a better example. Demonstrates an understanding of informational text. It's grayed out because that's not a standard or a concept that's being taught in term one. What that does when it's grayed out in that box is nobody can stray. Every teacher needs to make sure that that's not what they're teaching during that term one. That concept starts to be evaluated in term two.

Mr. McHugh:

So it does control the pacing, it does control the content that's being taught each term, and we have greater consistency in all of our elementary buildings. Teachers are on the same page. It's aligned to the maps that we've created. All of that mapping that we worked on for years now, and that mapping will continue, it's the report cards are aligned to that. So every entry that you see on this report card, there's a rubric, an accompanied rubric that actually describes a level four, level three, level two, level one. Any questions? Comments?

Ms. Massey:

I've got one.

Mr. McHugh:

Yes.

Ms. Massey:

So just out of curiosity, because I appreciate the complexity of this. Differentiated learning. How does it integrate into? So for example, if I'm bringing out the more advanced right in that term one, how does the differentiated learning kind of way over that Jim? Oh, I'm sorry.

Ms. Massey:

Thank you, Peter.

Mr. McHugh:

Being that we modify the expectation? That's a great thing. That's a great question. And that's the bonus of standards-based grading. So it's taking the emphasis off of that grade. The typical little league field and soccer field, report cards came out, my childhood got a 92 in science, or my child had a B in mathematics, looked at the child. It puts the focus and the emphasis back on the teaching and learning. So if there is the New York State standards, the next generation standards, are the standards. They're the standards for all students. So it's how the student is progressing to meet that standard. So the differentiation is right in the levels. A student may be a level two at that particular standard at that time. But it's a clear path and a clear explanation of what the student needs to accomplish. So if there's a student with an individual education plan, then that individual education plan puts those supports in places so students can be at that level three and level four. Does that help answer that question?

Ms. Massey:

It does. It's just when you look at it, -

Mr. McHugh:

It's an adjustment period.

Ms. Massey:

Absolutely.

Mr. McHugh:

What I will say, also, is that there's been several schools districts that have found these report cards and have called and contacted us, asked us can I purchased them, can I borrowed those? They're online,

they're in PDF format. And we've been very good neighbors and we've shared these out. There's some people that have contacted us from all over the state looking at these. So the goal is that the grade two and grade three report cards, standards-based report cards, are implemented next year. We'll start for grade four into grade five report card committee together. And we'll start to revisit that. There will be a transition period where we go back towards traditional grading. Where that goes, I'll report back to you. I don't know what will come out of that committee work. Any questions?

Ms. Massey:

Maybe finding a funding stream.

Ms. Taylor:

Thank you for your work on this. I think the consistency will prove monumental when these kids get to Goff, and they've been taught the same thing and graded the same way. I really think that we will see the benefits of this when the kids get to Goff.

Mr. McHugh:

I agree. And the other thing that will also be noticeable at Goff. We saw there was great science and social studies are on the report cards, it's being graded. It needs to be taught. So there's been such a heavy focus on ELA and mathematics in the elementary school, and that came down from the State, right? They held that accountability, talked to APPR, science and social studies took a back burner. It's on the report cards. We have those consistent units of instruction in science and social studies. I think what we will hear from our middle school teachers, and eventually our high school teachers, is that the kids are coming with a better foundational knowledge, especially in the content areas. Thank you.

Ms. Skumurski:

So, Jim, one question. On level three report card, D1 is blank, grayed out for art, music and gym? Why would that be?

Mr. McHugh:

We haven't put an official grade. That's they do it consistently. Did you say the grade two report card?

Ms. Skumurski:

Yeah.

Mr. McHugh:

Term one, there's no grade. It's a slight transition to grading. So if you look at the K and grade one report card, it's not listed on there. And then that's where it starts to be introduced. So great. The first term, they're not getting that grade, and then they are getting the grade.

Ms. Skumurski:

Thank you.

Mr. Dunn:

Jim, just a comment. There's a tremendous amount of work that went into this, and a lot of conversation, very evident. And I would encourage anybody that has access to this presentation in the



public to look at it. Because I think that identifies... We keep talking about certain student based learning and student progress, but we're getting back to the individual. And being able to tailor their educational plan when you have a good litmus to see how they're doing and the progress they're truly making. And that is one of the things that we've been talking about for years. When I think about my own school experiences and my children's school experience, the subjectivity at the lower grade levels can be really detrimental and allow a kid slip through without really identifying some of the needs. I think that this gives us a great opportunity for earlier interventions before they get into that real critical thing.

Mr. Dunn:

Not that you need any more work, but one of the challenges with the grading is at the middle school and high school level as well. Because again, I do like the idea of teachers' individual strengths and the different teaching styles because it teachers some resiliency in part of that path. But one of the things I'd like to see us, this model that goes into the... makes it to that level, is that consistency in grading might not have to be as intense as this, but to have a general departmental standard to where there is no rubric because then it will truly get rid of the people who are shopping teachers so to speak. That, quite honestly does go on, even when I was in, a million years ago when the horses came to school. We navigated through those types of path. Whereas if we create a really good rubric as we move through, the benefit will, like you said, go out to that middle school, high school level, because that's when it gets really challenging.

PART 2 OF 5 ENDS [00:58:04]

Mr. Dunn:

So again, thanks for the effort. I think it goes to... The emphasis on long-term planning that we put in educational plans is going to outlive at least our tenure on the board and in the district for a long time to come, so I really appreciate your efforts in this.

Mr. McHugh:

Yeah. Just a quick comment. I don't want the middle school to be neglected either, okay? They have really engaged in a lot of curriculum writing over the summers but those things, you don't see that work for a period of time. So they engaged in curriculum mapping and mathematics and science. And what we have tried to do is we tried to give all the teachers the ability to engage in that work, right, rather than one or two... You got work in the summer doing that curriculum mapping, that curriculum writing because we want people to own it and we want people to utilize it. So we have broadened that quite a bit. When we do some curriculum work, we could have 10 or 12 people working in the summer on that curriculum project.

Mr. Dunn:

I think that's really important, the way you just framed that and not to... We want to keep our teachers engaged, and I do believe in brainstorming and in group things, especially on the department level. And I never want a teacher to lose their own personal style because of the standard. But as long as we get to the goal where the kids are learning... You can learn differently but still know the same thing at the end of the day. And I think that's what makes high school special, is that you can get to a teacher that is really excited about what they do and that student clicks with that teacher because a lot of it is personality and style for people. And I think when kids have that opportunity to gravitate where they

feel comfortable, they will then learn more. And the same goes for teachers. If they teach in a lane that they're comfortable in, there'll be a lot more effective. And I just think that the environment that you guys have provided for our staff really just encourages that. And I just want to see that grow and continue. So thanks again.

Mr. Buono:

Thanks, John. Any other comments for Jim? Tremendous work. I want to thank the staff who are involved and the districts who... That work that is being done, the important part is like you said John, is really the conversations, the questions you posed earlier to get to that point so teachers and staff understand, families understand. That's a lot of work. It's not a boilerplate kind of thing because they have those conversations that take place beforehand so that parents, the community, can understand what's happening, how they can help your child and make those meaningful transitions to this grading system. So kudos to the team..

Mr. Simons:

All right. Okay. Very good.

Mr. Buono:

Okay. I see that concludes our reports and presentations. We have several discussion items. The first discussion item is the Annual Reorg Meeting in July and the scheduled draft. Jeff, you want to comment about your reorg?

Mr. Simons:

Sure. Yeah. As we were putting together the board calendar for next year, I came to realize quickly that the Organizational Meeting or the Reorg Meeting is required by State Education Department law to be on the first Tuesday in July. But if it's a legal holiday, it can move to the Wednesday. But also, boards can adjust that day as long as you have it by the 15th of the month. So I had a conversation with Don Budmen and he's prepared to send a resolution if the board is available that week. I didn't realize that I had a prior vacation that I'd better take... With the requirement that the Board can be here. So I'm asking the Board to consider moving it to the week of the 15th. And if the Board is comfortable with that, you have availability, I'll ask Don to draft a resolution and we'll have it on the agenda for the next meeting.

Ms. Skumurski:

So what day for him to finish up?

Mr. Buono:

So this handout says July 13th.

Ms. Skumurski:

That's right, exactly.

Mr. Simons:

Yes, but it could be the 13th, the 14th, or the 15th, as long as it's done by the 15th.

Ms. Skumurski:

I'm on vacation that week.

Mr. Simons:

Okay.

Mr. Buono:

I'm here. Just a show of hands... Cheryl will be new to the Board, so you'll be here, John, myself, Jeff. I think we'll have a quorum and we'll check with Kathleen and Deanna. All right.

Mr. Simons:

Which day is preferable to those that are here this week? Does it matter?

Mr. Buono:

13th or 14th for me is better.

Mr. Mann:

Yeah, 13th will do.

Mr. Simons:

Okay, good. Okay. 13th is okay, Cheryl is that okay with you? Okay, so we'll check in with Kathleen and with Deanna. Yeah. Pretty good. Thank you. I appreciate it very much.

Mr. Buono:

And we did try to schedule a couple more meetings. There's a lot of things happening with school opening in the fall, that we cover the school business. So there is an additional meeting. I know that meeting is for vacations and things like that. But if we could kind of get through that to help the administration, the team, to address the business things that they have to do as we go back to school in the fall... I don't want to say reopen because we're open.

Mr. Simons:

That's right.

Mr. Buono:

It's a different opening. So we do those kinds of things. So if there's going to be some challenges, look at that schedule, let myself or Jeff know so that we can at least make sure that there's a quorum for those meetings.

Mr. Simons:

We added an August meeting. We usually have one in the summer, but with everything regarding opening in September, as Mike said, we think we might be in another meeting. And then there were some months where we've only had one meeting where there's a three-week lag between meetings and it creates a volume of administrative responsibilities to prepare for the board. Sometimes it lengthens

the meetings. So November and December, we did adjust compared to the prior years, the week that we're having the meeting and we've gone with two meetings if that's okay with the Board?

Ms. Massey:

Yeah.

Mr. Buono:

Works for me. Any other feedback? Just for Jeff now, okay? Thank you.

Mr. Simons:

Thank you for helping me stay married by going on vacation. That was a joke.

Mr. Buono:

The next is the policy initiative of non-resident students. I saw background on that.

Mr. Simons:

Yes. Last year we received a request from an employee that we could not grant because our current policy regarding non-resident students require the payment of tuition. At the time, Mark Mann, our board vice president asked for us to consider a policy that would permit employees to have their children attend the school district and to waive the tuition for employees that were non-residents. We had two Policy Committee meetings with our Policy Committee to discuss this topic. We made some revisions to the current Admission of Non-resident Students Policy. We reviewed those changes with our attorney, Don Budmen.

Mr. Simons:

So basically what we have done is revise the current policy, 5152 that covers non-resident students, to permit employees to allow their children to attend tuition-free. There are some caveats and parameters for that approval. It includes submitting an application to the district by February so that we know how many students we can project as we prepare our budget. It also provides a reinforcement that transportation would not be provided for non-resident students, which is our current policy. Even in the case of employees, they would have to have transportation to school provided by the parent or some other arrangement.

Mr. Simons:

The policy also indicates that consideration of admission of non-resident students would not contribute to larger class sizes than what we're used to, incur additional expenses that could be foreseen. For example, having to add additional classroom sections of elementary grades. The policy would also not guarantee that an employee would be able to have their child, for example, at the elementary school level, attend the school that they actually work at. It would be based on enrollment and class sizes across, for example, the five elementary schools.

Mr. Simons:

And the other provision we put in is that this policy would not waive any contractual requirements of our employees. So their work hours, for example, the time that they have to report to school, the time that they are required to stay, to the end that we would not... This policy would not accommodate any

changes in the workday as required by the contract. And that was based on Board feedback at the Policy Committee. So we feel we've addressed almost every issue. This is a policy that we would want to monitor if we decided to go in this direction.

Mr. Simons:

The policy also, I forgot to mention, requires that the student maintain good academic achievement and follow the code of conduct. So if we had a situation, for example, where factors such as a disciplinary concern contributed to a decision... Perhaps it happened in another district, that there was a disciplinary concern in another district and it triggered a request or a situation that occurred when the student was here. This is a benefit that we're providing to our employees, and it can be revoked.

Mr. Buono:

Any feedback on the policy? I think you covered... I mean, I really appreciate that... The questions I had were answered. I would like to see the data... I think we have to have got something in place to see how this works for a couple of years.

Mr. Simons:

Yeah.

Mr. Buono:

And I would like to revisit it in case there is some concerns about numbers and placements and things like that. And you ultimately have the final decision, don't you?

Mr. Simons:

Yes.

Mr. Buono:

And I think the elementary question for me is important. Where they go, it's not guarantee that the student go to the same school, it's based on enrollment. They could potentially be shifted to another school in the district. So those kinds of things are important for families who choose to send their children... So next steps, is there any other comments? No? Next steps?

Mr. Simons:

Well, we scheduled it as a discussion item, so it's not on for a first reading. If there are no concerns or objections to this, we will bring it forward to the next meeting as a first reading as we typically do.

Mr. Buono:

Okay.

Mr. Simons:

And if anybody has any questions or comments between now and next time, or between the first reading and the second reading, we can make revisions to the policy.

Mr. Buono:

Yeah. And I think that because it's under discussion items if there are community members who'd be weighing in on our support for that.

Mr. Simons:

Very good, thank you.

Mr. Dunn:

Just a quick question, Jeff.

Mr. Buono:

John?

Mr. Dunn:

Will this create a flood or have you have a litmus for how much the employees would utilize this?

Mr. Simons:

I don't, really. I don't really know. I haven't discussed this with employee groups yet because I wasn't sure whether or not the Board was going to approve the policy. I would say that I think that some of our employees would want to benefit from this change. I don't know how many. I know there are other factors that would enter into a parent's mind, kids going to the same school, with the kids in their neighborhood. Generally, it's something that would prevent somebody from doing this. I think it's going to be very individualized based on the family circumstances.

Mr. Dunn:

Okay, thank you.

Mr. Buono:

And I think revisiting the issue, we will get more data about that.

Mr. Simons:

We can provide you with class size data, resident students versus non-residents by building, how many non-resident students are attending by building and by grade level. Yeah, happy to do that.

Mr. Dunn:

I don't think we've really ever had a problem with tuition-paying members, or non-resident students flooding the district or saying no to anybody who did .

Mr. Simons:

Right. Right.

Mr. Mann:

I agree. I don't think we're going to have a huge influx but I think the cause is solid, I think it's a good policy. I don't foresee an overabundance of students.

Mr. Dunn:

That wasn't my concern at all. I think if we could encourage people to pay us tuition, to join us, and this great service we're providing, it's great. I was just looking at it as an employee benefit because then we're not getting any tuition.

Mr. Mann:

Right.

Mr. Dunn:

So I was just concerned... I mean, I don't want to say concerned, but I just was wondering if you had an idea that... Because say hypothetically, if 10 people did it right away, that is an economic impact for us. And I just want to be prepared for that impact, that's all. I'm not opposed to the impact, but I just... If we have some data, I think it would be good to kind of have an idea of what we're in for.

Mr. Simons:

Yeah, correct. I think that February 1st... Some of the sample policies that we looked at had June deadlines. I talked to the Policy Committee that I would prefer February so that we could manage where those kids would be assigned as we do our class size projections and number of sections across K5, which is part of our budget process.

Mr. Simons:

The other thing is to let the parent know early enough that well, yes, we can accommodate your child, but it may be a different school than what they anticipated, and the reasons are because we want to have the class sizes be equitable across the district as much as possible. But we will definitely keep the Board informed once this policy is approved. What's happening with it, how many students are we anticipating coming into the district, and whether or not it is having an effect? One thing I forgot to add was substitutes are not eligible for this if we talked about that. These are employees that are... They can be probationary employees, but they are regular employees, not substitutes.

Mr. Buono:

Pretty good. The next item on C, end-of-the-year celebrations, ceremonies, and activities.

Mr. Simons:

Yes. I have received some communications from parents regarding some of the end-of-the-year celebrations. And we wanted to take an opportunity publicly to talk about the efforts that are going on to make sure that we celebrate the achievement of our kids at the end of this year appropriately. And I think we are doing that. At fifth grade level, and at the eighth grade level, and at the high school level. I'll start with the graduation. Around April 27th, the State issued new guidance for end-of-the-year celebrations, which included parameters for indoor and outdoor ceremonies. Included virtual ceremonies all the way up to outdoor ceremonies.

Mr. Simons:

Since then, we looked at that policy and any changes that have come forth, which haven't been very many. And the initial guidance indicated that for an outdoor ceremony if you had more than 250 attendees, you had to require the attendees to provide proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test. In

the case of a rapid test, that test had to be conducted within six hours prior to the ceremony. In the case of the PCR test, it had to be 72 hours prior to the ceremony. If you go to 251, you've got to have those two requirements.

Mr. Simons:

And we discussed here, actually in the board meeting, that we felt that we would run into some difficulties managing that process and enforcing that process. And so we decided that we would stay within the limits of 250 attendees. We received some clarification from the State for both athletics and graduations, that the students don't count as part of that 250, as long as they are sitting in a different area than the spectators or the attendees. But even with our size class, we are still looking at very large numbers with a little bit shy of 350 students, 700 attendees if it was two parents or two family members attending. So the 700 was well over the threshold. And so we decided to go with multiple ceremonies to reduce the number of attendees within those limits, which reduces the number of students that graduated through each of the respective ceremonies.

Mr. Simons:

Since that time, the State indicated one change and they raised the number of attendees for an outdoor ceremony to 500. And so in that case, we took a look at what could be done. We even considered the alternative of having one ceremony, and we felt that given the capacity of the high school in combination with the challenges of ensuring that everyone there, every person there who was attending that ceremony, would have the proof of a negative COVID test and vaccine that we could potentially run into a situation where someone was denied access to the ceremony. It could cause potential disruption, and we didn't want to take that chance. And so we decided now that we could let more people in... And I conferred with some of our board officers, as well as with the high school administrators, our central office team, Mr. Harkin's team here at the high school, and Karen Vincent our COVID coordinator at, and we examined the logistics that would be involved in requiring the testing. And we just came to the conclusion that it would be potentially fraught with problems.

Mr. Simons:

So we did decide to address some of the concerns that we've had about perhaps providing students with an opportunity to bring more than just two guests. And we made an adjustment from our original four-ceremony model down to three, and we are allowing students to bring four guests. And we feel that that is an adjustment that will keep us within the parameters of the State guidance. We think it will provide more opportunities for our graduates to invite brothers and sisters, for example, or grandma and grandpa. And we think at this point unless something unforeseeable happens, that's the model we're going to go with for the high school graduation.

Mr. Simons:

At the middle school level, the PTO worked with Jill Barker, the principal, to survey the parents. The initial survey that went out included a similar program that occurred last year for eighth-grade elevation. It was a drive-through celebration in front of the school. The second option included virtual award ceremonies and some other things. We added a third option once we had confidence that the graduation ceremony could be set up in advance on Thursday. We're going to use the same structure for eighth-grade elevation, same set up at the high school, on the high school field, same seating arrangements, same procedures, same equipment, including the use of the jumbotron and live streaming.



Mr. Simons:

So eighth-graders will have a ceremony at the high school on Thursday evening. I think that's the 24th. Okay. And the rain date for that would be the next morning because the afternoon is scheduled for the high school ceremony. So we think in the case of both the middle school elevation celebration and the high school graduation ceremony, that will be very nice for our graduates. And while we wish we could have all the kids together, bring as many guests as we wanted, we think that what we will be offering will be very, very nice and appropriate.

Mr. Simons:

And then students are free to... If students are not assigned to a group with all of their friends, certainly after the ceremonies are completed, we recognize that there'll be other things, social experiences, graduation parties, other things happening. One of the reasons why we moved it to a Friday is because families had been expressing to us that they wanted to have the Saturday open for graduation celebrations.

Mr. Simons:

At the fifth-grade level, there's lots of things happening for the kids. The logistics of setting up a ceremony for fifth grade moving up are a little bit more difficult. Younger children, more people, not necessarily appropriate outdoor facilities in every building. So the fifth-grade principals all got together and developed the same plan. And that will be a drive-through event. A little bit more extended than last year. Kids will be able to get out of the cars with their families, receive the gifts and certificates that they have in the past. They'll be an opportunity for photos to be taken outside of the car. They'll be music playing, decorations, and all kinds of fanfare out in front of the schools. And we think it will be very, very nice.

Mr. Simons:

In addition, the fifth-grade principals are all having field days that they have traditionally had, school-wide picnics that they traditionally had. Some are taking students to the Fun Park in East Greenbush. And all of these activities are being done within the current guidance. I've reviewed every one of them. I've signed off on every one of them, and only I think it will be very nice for our fifth-graders, our eighth-graders, and our senior graduates this year. And hopefully next year, honestly, we may find that we like having the ceremony at the high school. And we may explore ways to maintain that, or we'll go back to utilizing a venue that can accommodate all of our children and their families.

Mr. Buono:

Sure, of course. Any comments on the end-of-year graduation, fifth-grade graduation, elevation, eighth, fifth grade? For the high school side, I know that... All the work that was done to change and modify with the guidance, to allow families to be more present. I know that was something that we talked about. As someone who... My son graduated recently from UAlbany and it was kind of a walk-through ceremony but it allowed more of us to be there, which I think was important, which is a distinction from last year, where only a couple of folks could go. This will allow much more family members, guests, friends to be part of that, and it's really special. I feel bad that we can't be all together, but we'll make it special for everybody.

Mr. Simons:

Thank you,

Mr. Buono:

Jennifer?

Ms. Massey:

So I know what the question has come up a lot on the correspondence that we've all been receiving. Can you talk a little bit about why perhaps the decision was to not go to another venue or option because I think that that's something that's weighing heavily on the minds of the parents, because they're seeing the other districts around us, looking at those venues and securing those venues?

Mr. Simons:

I know that Mr. Harkin spoke to all of the vendors that you're referring to. The Times Union Center, the Hudson Valley couldn't guarantee at a time that they would be not involved in testing. There were fluctuating prices quoted to different districts related to the Times Union. I think it's about 16 or \$17,000. That wasn't the primary factor that we determined to rule that out. It was really about making sure that we, as a district... We know our kids, we know our families. We think there is some benefit to having it on our own property because of all the restrictions. We have existing relationships.

Mr. Simons:

And honestly, we're worried about someone unknown to a family... Security person, I'm certain, will do a very good job, getting into a situation with one of our families and saying, "Well, grandpa can't come in. Grandma can't come in. You don't have your proof of vaccination." One of the benefits that other districts have spoken of regarding going to the Times Union, is that they don't have to deal with that. I feel like as a district because we have relationships with people, we know the kids, that we should be the ones facilitating the ceremony and not remove ourselves from our responsibility. So that's ultimately why we decided to do it the way that we're doing it.

Mr. Simons:

I have had situations, not here but in the past, where an outside venue is utilized and the folks that were enforcing the rules didn't understand the importance of our relationship with the kids and our relationship with the families and it soured the event. So we weighed it, we tried it, we thought about it, but at the end of the day, we thought we had more control and a better chance of success if we did it ourselves.

Ms. Massey:

Thank you. That's great so that everybody can understand what the thought process was that led to that.

Mr. Simons:

I appreciate that question, Jennifer. Thank you.

Mr. Buono:

Thanks, Jeff. Anyone else? We have a few more discussion items. The next one's on the...

Mr. Buono:

We have a few more discussion items. The next one's on the federal funding for the American Rescue Plan, CRRSAA. There were some suggestions put out. There's a template that has been filled out on those funds and then some ideas around that. Do you want to talk briefly about that, Jeff?

Mr. Simons:

Yes. I think by the next meeting, we'll have a more detailed document that's filled in to share with you. We're still in the process, our central office team and others of identifying the needs that we're going to have and developing some proposals for the board to review. As you recall, we were getting about \$7 million in funds that are outside of the general fund budget. We want to be prudent about how those monies are spent, CARES Act monies as well as the American Rescue Act monies. This is a template that was provided by Questar BOCES with the Nursing School Boards Association to plan out the expenditures. We envisioned putting together something that looks much like our scorecard, as a plan that has an evaluation tool, measures dates, timelines, objectives. Right now, we're brainstorming.

Mr. Simons:

We're talking about such things as academic learning gaps. What could we do to provide early intervention in our early elementary grades K to three? That may involve deploying some additional staff that would eventually attrition out as people retire so that if the kids are coming into kindergarten, first, second, and third grade and their reading levels and their math levels, we can give them a little boost by providing smaller teacher-student ratios. We're also talking about the mental health needs of our students. We are in conversations with the county Commissioner of Mental Health about a school-based clinic that would be supplemental to what our counselors and social workers already do. The benefits of a school-based clinic honor, if a student has an appointment for an outside referral, they're more likely to attend that appointment at the clinic that's right there in the school and the family can get that access to it that may not actually cost a lot of money, if any money, because it's Medicaid reimbursable through the county. We're talking about that.

Mr. Simons:

We're talking about ways that we can use this money to address air quality and through our construction meetings, we've been talking with Ben from as well as our architect and Trane about what we might be able to do to start the process of upgrading unit ventilators that will handle some of the higher grade filters and a number of other areas talking about student engagement at the middle school and the high school level. If we can provide ways for kids who may be chronically absent to come back to school and want to be in school because they're involved in the program that might be a culinary program, for example, or occasional program earlier than when they're eligible to start at both seats. Linda and Jim, help me out. Marissa, what am I missing? We'll have a whole list for you at the next meeting, but we are working on this.

Ms. Wager:

Actually, you covered quite a few. We did talk about possibly extending the CTAEP program into grade five.

Mr. Simons:

Yes.

Ms. Wager:

We're considering the MAP program, extending that to grade six. In addition too, we did talk about possibly starting our own autism program in the district. We talked about some technology needs and how we might use some of this money to satisfy our technology needs and continuous into the future. We talked about some help desk. Possibly, it would be run by students possibly with oversight by our own district employees. I think that's that.

Mr. Simons:

Very much an early work in progress. We will have a complete draft to share with you. I'll share it and answer it the next board meeting. It's so important. Members want to ask questions or make comments. As we speak, we're still getting documents about how to interpret these federal guidelines. The positions such as the COVID coordinator can be funded in it. If we need to maintain a COVID coordinator for next year, which I think we will have to, that'll be put into that grant.

Mr. Simons:

Some of the purchasing of creating investment [inaudible 01:32:01] and those kinds of things are eligible within the grant. There's also a way we're still studying this that we might be able to use some of this money, if the board approved, to establish a capital reserve, which we don't have and a capital reserve would enable you to have money set aside similar to the transportation, the bus purchase reserve, to offer the community a bond referendum that you take the portion that is not aidable from the state and you use that money to reduce the local share cost of it, so it would have no one no tax impact. That is a permissible as I understand when you utilize this money, because it's creating sustainability to upgrade your infrastructures to address health and safety within the schools. We've got a lot of brainstorming going on, and I promise you we will be spending this money wisely.

Mr. Buono:

In the final hosting [inaudible 01:33:05] folks said at some point or was there requirement for posting for public employment to that, or no?

Ms. Wager:

We will have to post our plan by July 1st for public comment.

Mr. Buono:

The question I had too is if Board members want to give input, you got to send out the list and then we can comment on that?

Mr. Simons:

Yes.

Mr. Buono:

I do think it's important what you said earlier, Jeff, that the scorecard and the district's objectives and goals need to drive the decision making process around this.

Mr. Simons:

Right.

Mr. Buono:

It's tied in directly what the needs of the district are. It is a lot of money. You want to use it wisely and it'd be able to sustain some of the things that are in place for that.

Mr. Simons:

Great.

Mr. Buono:

Any other comments on this topic? I look forward to seeing that list?

Mr. Simons:

Sure.

Mr. Buono:

Pre-K planning, I know we had money this year, the budget... In terms of the funding from the State for pre-K?

Mr. Simons:

We have been consulting with the State Education Department, as well as folks that reside in our community and work with the State who oversee pre-K programs, specifically Headstart programs. Our allocation per student, I think it's \$5,400 per student that will cover 108 students total. Based on the discussions we've had so far, we requested some samples, RFPs that were issued to community-based providers as well as contracts that had been approved between districts and community-based providers. We're looking at those to explore what will be involved in an RFP. The more we learn about this, the more we believe that contracting out through an RFP process to an agency that already does this that has the curriculum in place, the supports in place and has the space to provide it would be the best way to go back on 95%, certainly that would be my recommendation to the board.

Mr. Simons:

The advantage of that is we don't incur concerns about the sustainability of a district operated program in the district building, higher number of employees incur all of those obligations. Then, we don't know whether we're ever going to get the money next year. How it would work is similar to hiring the architect or hiring the auditors. The Board would have input into the RFP document. We would send the RFP document out to any other CBOs that are on the list of the state who are within district. I think it has to be within the district. That's a window or operating programs within the district. I believe it does. I'm not 100% sure of that.

Ms. Wager:

I am not certain of that.

Mr. Simons:

Okay. They would have a deadline to respond to their RFP and our standards established in the RFP including use some of New York State curriculum, appropriate class sizes, which are 18 one-one. If you had a 19 students, you have to have 18, one-two. Appropriate space for the classes, appropriate staffing, reporting mechanism back to the District because we are ultimately responsible for overseeing

it, so we can collect the information. We can do site visits. The slots would be paid for by the District. We'll take what was called... I'll make up a name. CBO number one, if they get the RFP and are awarded the RFP and they had X number of slots available, we would pay for those slots through a contract and there might be multiple CBOs on contract with the district because we'd go up to 108 kids.

Ms. Wager:

Yeah. I think that is the main advantage of basically outsourcing this is that we have an allocation of \$5,400 per student up to 108 students. That's \$583,200. The space issue comes into play. If we outsource this to multiple locations, we may be able to fill the 108 spots whereas we may be restricted in district.

Mr. Simons:

And parents would have to participate in a lottery and that lottery would go up to the number of slots that are available and we cannot... It is random. For example, we cannot say we want X number. I don't believe we can say we have X number of slots to go to families who live in Nassau or who are served by DPS. It has to be completely random or we want the same percentage of families across the five elementary school zones. We can't do that. We're not allowed by state rules to do it. It's the first 108 that get drawn in and want to participate.

Ms. Wager:

Yes. Completely random selection.

Mr. Buono:

Do you have multiple CBO's?

Mr. Simons:

Yes.

Mr. Buono:

How will that work in if they are in different geographic locations?

Mr. Simons:

I assigned that. Yes. That's what I'm talking about.

Mr. Buono:

I think that's the direction we should go in to provide the most opportunity for pre-K.

Mr. Simons:

It would be also, I think the quickest way to get up and running with it as opposed to setting up our own classroom and hiring our own teachers, our own teaching assistants.

Mr. Buono:

I would like to see a Board member to follow the RFP and the selection process.

Mr. Simons:

We are interested in forming an early childhood committee, and that's one of the things I think we will start with. If there is a Board member that has... I will work around your schedules for the meetings, but if you are interested in general, contact me and we will get you .

Mr. Buono:

I'm interested.

Mr. Simons:

Very good. Good call.

Mr. Buono:

Anyone else wants to participate?

Ms. Skumurski:

I'm interested.

Mr. Yeboah:

I'm interested.

Mr. Simons:

Okay.

Mr. Buono:

All right.

Mr. Simons:

Yeah. Very good.

Mr. Buono:

Good job. We have all three of us.

Mr. Simons:

Okay. Excellent. Well, we'll have all three of them.

Mr. Buono:

Very good.

Mr. Simons:

Mike, Frank and Michelle.

Mr. Buono:

All right. Very good.

Mr. Simons:

I'll let you know some times and dates and let me know what works for you. Excellent.

Mr. Buono:

Next item is the Bonadio contract extension.

Mr. Simons:

The first one, we got that one.

Mr. Buono:

Linda?

Ms. Wager:

Thank you. We've had a contract with Bonadio for our independent auditing services from 2015-'16 school year through the '19-'20 school year. Tonight for your consideration is an extension of one year extension for the Bonadio group to complete the audit for the 2020-2021 school year. Then, we will issue an RFP in the fall.

Mr. Buono:

Pretty straight forward. Any questions?

Mr. Mann:

Why are we looking to extend for one year, and not in the original RFP?

Ms. Wager:

Well, quite honestly, during the transition, it became later in the year. The RFP process would have been too rushed to establish that in time for the audit this year.

Mr. Simons:

Technically, their contract is expired right now.

Mrs. Skumurski:

With how much increase was there?

Ms. Wager:

\$1,000.

Mr. Mann:

Did they ask us for a one year extension, or we asked them for a one year extension?

Ms. Wager:

We are asking them for a one-year extension.



Mr. Mann:

They were interested in it?...

Ms. Wager:

Yes.

Mr. Mann:

They still want to raise their fees.

Ms. Wager:

Yes.

Mr. Buono:

You raised some valid points. I think the RFP will really tell us, I think in part of the process and I understand what you're...

Mr. Mann:

Any organization or company is interested in doing business with us. We could say, "Hey, could you stay on for another year?" They will say, "Yeah. Sure. Absolutely. Keep it as it is and keep going and look." They say, "Yeah, absolutely. Well, we're going to raise our fee. It's not an RFP."

Ms. Wager:

Well, Mr. Mann, there are some additional requirements this year. There was a GASB requirement that we have to implement this year, which they will assist us with. Also, there is federal funding that they have additional requirements on auditing.

Mr. Mann:

Understood.

Mr. Buono:

Any other comments with the discussion item? This contract extension is going to Regular business in the next meeting.

Mr. Simons:

Yes, sir.

Mr. Buono:

Lastly, you mentioned earlier in the meeting, Jeff, the summer school?

Mr. Simons:

Again, opportunity to give a quick summary of the summer school program. It's really coming together. In my site, we do have a high interest.

Mr. McHugh:

Just a quick summary. We put an initial survey out to all of our district families with children currently in kindergarten through eighth grade to see the interest in participating in a four-week further education summer school program. The survey closed on May 3rd. The concern was that we had a 48.9% participation, so we were a little nervous of 51% of our parents didn't respond to the survey and we had to staff this program, which is a tremendous challenge right now. Once we got the ball rolling, we were afraid that we'd have a lot of parents, et cetera. I wasn't aware, and that number would increase. We decided to send out a second survey that went out to just the parents that did not respond to the first survey.

Mr. McHugh:

That survey is listed within the document that was shared. That survey closed on Friday, May 21st. The numbers that were in that posted report are a little bit different. I have that breakdown of students. Again, that survey's enclosed. We were very clear in our description of what the summer school program would be, that it was going to be in the K-5 focus, K going to grade one, grade one, grade two and so on. That K-5 focus would be ELA and mathematics and that social-emotional component and the grades six through eight, it will support core content areas that again, the social-emotional learning component. There was an internal posting in the district for a school principal as well as posting for general ed teachers to staff, our summer school program. There was one application for the principal position, internal candidate with the administrator qualification.

Mr. McHugh:

There were 16 internal candidates that posted to work summer school, and six of those candidates also applied for the extended school year program. We really had 10 people apply, and we really are looking at probably 20 to 29 sections for summer school for K-8. We have an external posting that's out currently. In regards to Columbia High School, they will run their traditional Apex program. Typically, each year, they see 50 to 80 students that participate in that Apex program. What is new is their summer enrichment program, which the goal of the high school is to bring 120 students grades nine through 12 for that summer school enrichment program. Again, that'll focus on the four core areas plus the arts, and it will also have that social-emotional learning department. We will post a social worker for each one of those programs, so teaching assistants to help logistically. What we are going to do is the time for the K-8 program would be 8:45 to 11:45 as the instructional day..

Mr. McHugh:

That'll allow the kids to participate in the extended 12-month program to commit to school, to get settled in the classrooms. Then, we'll stagger that arrival and dismissal, so we're not overlapping logistically. We are funding as much of this program as we can to the Questar, so that we get the aid that we can get on it. There is a collaboration piece for our teachers, which is really powerful. The workday for our teachers will be a four-hour work day, Tuesday through Friday. Mondays will be a five-hour workday because we'll have one hour in the afternoon for collaboration with other teachers and they'll really dig into those standards. What are those critical concepts? What are those critical standards that really needs to get addressed

Mr. McHugh:

to kids up to speed and give a little boost for the upcoming school year. The social-emotional learning component, we want to do some universal, meaning that we want our social workers to push in to the sessions and do some universal social-emotional learning work with our students and we'll also continue

with any kind of support services at our small group or individual as well. We are looking at those students that have been remote all year to help transition them back into the building. In order to participate in the Questar program, we need at least one student to participate in Questar's remote summer school program.

Mr. McHugh:

They could either participate in the grades nine through 12 Apex credit recovery remotely, or they could participate in grades three through 12 remote summer school programs. We're working on the next sets. If we get an approval for our summer school principal, I will work with our summer school principal to get up more formal communication out to the parents that stated they are interested in having their child participate and try to get a real firm commitment that the students are going to speed because that will drive our staff. Any questions?

Mr. Buono:

Questions or comments on summer school? No? Good luck with the standing piece, and [inaudible 01:49:11] district senator running summer school. I think it's challenging that we're running our own extended school year program with several kids and students. It's challenging. You can get existing staff to want to work this summer because of what happened over the past 15 months. Moving on, any more comments or discussion? Moving on to [inaudible 01:49:40] business, the district building results, very pleased about those. Anything you want to add, Jeff, to that?

Mr. Simons:

No. I just want to, again, thank the community for their outpouring of support, a positive vote resolve 87% on the budget, 88% on the transportation purchases. I want to thank the board members who ran for the board again and I want to thank our new board member from the community for being willing to serve on a voluntary basis, which in a really great capacity as a school board member. Look forward to continue to work with the board members. Again, I thank the community for the overall great result on our budget vote, and I want to specifically thank Linda Wager for all her work on the preparation of the budget and the preparation of the golden egg, which is always nerve wracking.

Mr. Buono:

Excellent. Any other comments regarding the budget vote results?

Ms. Wager:

Mr. [inaudible 01:50:39]?

Mr. Buono:

Yes. Go ahead.

Ms. Wager:

I'm just going to add to that. There's a couple of people too, that I like to recognize and that I'd like to publicly thank our election workers. There are many that have returned year after year, and we had a lot of new people this year. They really helped to make things go smooth. Maura Przybylek our vote chair person, and she really does oversee the day and she does an excellent job with that. I have to mention, special thanks to Jeanne Pangburn, our district clerk and my secretary as well as Stephanie Jorgensen,

Mr. Simon's secretary, they really were like two right-hand people this year and really helped me coordinate and make sure things run smoothly. I do appreciate their efforts as well.

Mr. Buono:

Thank you, Linda. I just want to say, thank you to the committee for the support. The board did try to put out a very strong budget that supports kids in learning and achieving the goal of addressing academic gaps that may occur in the pandemic, and meet in-person was good to see. It turned out was a little lighter than usual, but we want to thank the community for coming out. Those who came out and voted and support the budget, we really appreciate it. We have a lot of things planned for the next year.

Mr. Simons:

All right. Very good.

Mr. Buono:

With that, I need a motion to approve the results, Frank. Second, Michelle? Those in favor? Good. [Approval of the program for resident children with disabilities, any questions or comments there? Seeing none, there's a motion to approve that. Jennifer. Second, JoAnn? All those in favor? Approved. We have a school bus accident first reading policy. I have changes...

Mr. Simons:

The policy committee, met to review a recommendation for a new policy related to bus accidents. Historically, there have been procedures in place to ensure that students and anybody on the bus is evaluated for potential injury. There was a need to clarify what those procedures were. At one time, I think there was an expectation that school nurses could respond to the scene of an accident. That creates a liability during the school day when those nurses are serving children into the buildings. We decided that with consultation with the police department, BOCES's health and safety. Mr. Tooker who serves in a safety capacity and our administrative team, Mr. Noeth, that we would, that we would require emergency services to be called in every instance.

Mr. Simons:

The original draft of the policy that was put together, Molly McGrath, was also instrumental in helping us put this together, indicated that if there was one student out of the bus, we should still call in. Mrs. Taylor being conscientious indicated that she preferred or asked to say, even if there isn't a student on the bus that we should call EMS to come and make an assessment of the driver. We've concluded that change, which was a good one. We have everything spelled out in policy and regulation procedures now, so there should be no confusion.

Mr. Buono:

Very good, questions on the policy? . If you do get those to Jeff, I and the committee, and then we'll move that to second reading at the next meeting Next item is the Bonadio contract extension that Linda mentioned through discussion item. Any questions or comments? Need a motion to approve that. Michele. Second, John. Those in favor? Those opposed? Okay. Approved. The next is the engagement letter. Any questions or comments on the engagement letter? Linda, this is the distinction in the engagement letter in the extension. It spells out there.

Ms. Wager:

Yes. The engagement letter spells out from the auditors exactly what their objectives are and their procedures. Monitoring our, taking a look at our internal controls and testing those controls as well as taking a look at our estimates that we make as far as pension liabilities. We have an actuary of service that helps us with that. We also make estimates on our depreciation and the life of our equipment, those types of things. That's what the engagement letter talks about and how they'll perform their own.

Mr. Buono:

Very good. Any questions for Linda? I see none. Any motion to approve the resolution for the engagement letter? Michele, second? Jennifer. Those in favor? Those opposed? Approved. Next, we have our committee reports. Marissa?

Ms. Cannon:

Our Appendix D meeting that on May 6th and also on May 11th. At our May 11th meeting, we spoke about-

PART 4 OF 5 ENDS [01:56:04]

Ms. Cannon:

Our May 11th meeting, we spoke about a draft compensation, matrix, and myself on Mr. McHugh and Mrs. Taylor provided EDTA with a draft matrix that was within the budget parameters of approximately \$188,000. We reviewed that matrix as a committee together, EGTA had provided their input and they were looking at a compensation matrix of around \$217,000, which is about \$30,000 outside of the budget. We refocused our attention at that meeting specifically regarding the charge of the committee and what we've been tasked with, which is staying within those budgeted parameters and making sure we have an equitable distribution of funds and fair to done.

Ms. Cannon:

I had asked the EGTA to take another look at their cost structure, which they agreed to, and they provided us with their update on May 20th. We most recently met on Monday, May 24th in the committee, and it's a very positive meeting, both Mr. Romanowski and Mrs. Hosier took a very fair time at drafting, a cost matrix. And right now we are very close to being within the budgeted parameters for only about \$4,000 apart. We spoke about some suggestions on where we could get into the budget parameters. And the only other thing on the table right now for continued discussions are unpaid clubs. And we will be meeting again on June 10th. Does anyone have any questions regarding the committee minutes?

Mr. Buono:

No, no question. Thank you Marissa we appreciate you working on it. We're close?

Ms. Cannon:

We're close.

Mr. Buono:

Before the end of the year?

Ms. Cannon:

Before the end of the year.

Mr. Buono:

Linda.

Ms. Wager:

Thank you. The Finance and Audit Committee met on May 13th and that the purpose of that was to review the engagement letter with our independent auditors. We went through, as I said earlier, auditor responsibilities, our management responsibilities, and how the audit will be conducted. And when it will be conducted, which is the third week in August. And we also had our internal auditor, Michael Wolfe, present at the meetings. He will be beginning his risk assessment actually tomorrow there'll be here tomorrow and Friday. And the Welds will be back in June to, to finish that work. And just finally, I wanted to recognize Mrs. Alyssa Blostein, who has been a member of the finance and audit committee meeting since 2014. And she'll be stepping away after this, as her son is graduating from Columbia high school. So she'll be moving on to other things, but she has really been main contributor to our committee for a few years now.

Mr. Buono:

Any questions for Linda? Nope. Thanks Linda. Jim you have several items on your committee.

Mr. McHugh:

I will spare you professional development, but May 3rd, there is the 2021-2022 professional development plan at the end of the June 9th, Board Agenda for Superintendents report discussion item. She has met on may fit special education and related services program review was presented that will probably come to the Board at some point in July. And the Education Committee met on May 10th. We had a very rich discussion regarding our graduation rate and looking at our non-completers over the last five years. That data is fast as well. Any questions?

Mr. Buono:

Library information, since the graduation.

Mr. McHugh:

The boss keeps me busy.

Mr. Simons:

Sometimes the way you characterize things was not exactly the way I did. Mr. McHugh An extensive dropout analysis. I just want to talk about it a little bit. When we look at our graduation rate, I actually exceeded expectations because I challenged Mr. McHugh

Mr. Simons:

McEwen and look at it, kid by kid who are the kids that dropped out over the last five cohorts? What was the profile of those kids? What were some of the issues that they were challenged by? And I wanted to know, and then like even further than that and did an extensive review so that we can see some of the characteristics of the kids and what happens in some cases solve and what some of the challenges.

So we could do a better job of intervening at various stages as we follow the kids up in track. So Jim did a super job at that. The way he presented it to the committee. I didn't quite say the numbers aren't good enough, but I do appreciate your advocacy for the kids and looking at what we can do to prevent dropouts.

Ms. Skumurski:

Jim, I have to say that was excellent. The analysis was great. Do we see changes in how we handle things policy-wise? Like what Jeff said, I'm trying to help prevent, I see tenth grade a big drop out period. Like, could we focus a little bit on the 10th graders and see what we can do to help stop that? I, you know, I don't know when their ideas of have for maybe the future.

Mr. McHugh:

Well, you know, it was just a right first, you present the data, let people digest it a little bit and respond to it. It's sensitive a little bit because we own that data. We have a 97% graduation rate. So there's a lot of positives to focus on a lot of success stories. And I can tell you that our faculty and our support services, they go above and beyond. There were some interesting trends that I just will speak to briefly. A lot of those students, when we looked at our 38 students that were, that did not complete, interesting enough, there was just shy of a half dozen students that were academically performing excellent. They were the A-student high flyer and all of a sudden the typical trend of attendance, chronic absenteeism, and they just fall off. So those are students that wouldn't identify a present as an at-risk student, for any other reason, there was no behavior problem.

Mr. McHugh:

There was nothing on the radar, high flyers, they just stopped. So it opens up a huge discussion. This, for example, this school year dealing with COVID pandemic that I kept, that has been a tremendous challenge. But is there, is there a need for a student that may be able to get through that time with, with a remote format even past the COVID pandemic?

Mr. McHugh:

Well what I will say we do a really good job in our high school, especially this is a great job at getting kids in the right program. There were several cases where the students were placed in an alternate education program, for example, CTAEP and they, and it was a complete turnaround. They went from failing multiple courses, to passing all of their courses and then refuse the placement, and then things went south. There's a large number of students that are transients, meaning that they enter our district, maybe in the middle school or the high school in, you know, what I really did was I kind of did a biography on each one of those students and collected as much data if they were ours from kindergarten as much data as I could find on them.

Mr. McHugh:

But you know, there's a situation. There's several situations where shootings were having really challenging issues at another district, whether it was their social circle, whether they became disengaged and in a last ditch effort parents relocate to another school district and enroll to trying to give them a fresh start. A lot of times that hole is just too big for a student to get out. They just, they lose that hope and that's a problem. So I want to emphasize the fact that our 97% graduation rate, and I'll go on record saying this would not be where it is without CTAEP, without Operation Graduation,

without Columbia Alternate Program, without that, without Jumpstart and without, you know, faculty and administration going the extra mile for kids, we've, we've provided the tutor.

Mr. McHugh:

These students during this time to bridge that gap, are there things that we can do to improve? There are, it's a sensitive subject because it, when you talk about the non-completers over five years being 38 people, aren't hearing all the success stories of all the kids that walk across that graduation stage and graduated because of the extra effort. So it was that initial presentation of the data, that people, you know, look at it for a little while and think about it and then pick up that discussion again, because there are things. Those are the things that we're looking at right now, like for example, expanding MAP down to grade six, it is those transitional years where students really struggled. Elementary to the middle school, middle school to the high school. So those are the things that we're looking at currently put in place for next year.

Ms. Skumurski:

Yeah, and I think it's really important to distinguish the graduation rates and to I mean you look at every trend and we're right on top, which you know is pretty amazing.

Mr. McHugh:

Yeah. It felt like a black rain cloud at the education committee, cause I presented that data and, and, you know, it's, it's hard when it's right in front of you. Right. But you know, the fact that some students aren't even on our radar, that there's high flyers academically, not presenting having any issues at all, but for some reason, you know, stop coming to school. If you dig a little deeper, there's some mental health concerns in there. So, you know, we've made it, we've made a tremendous effort to really provide that professional development and really talk about some things that are difficult to talk about, but every student matters, you know, Mr. Simons Pulled me to task and really picked the look at that. So those are all great questions and it's a great discussion.

Mr. Simons:

The truth, as I mentioned, an issue, and Jim takes it and runs with it, which is a great thing. And does a great job with it. And I appreciate the effort because we can, we can do things with shallow that focus on some of those difficult transition years. And we can develop a system to track those kids as they move from elementary to middle school, to high school that had those indicators early on, they might be in jeopardy of not graduating. That's the next conversation it seems we're going to, we're going to have with folks now that we...

Mr. McHugh:

Just real quick. One thing that came right out of that as well, we have a student transition in. We talked about a mentor. We talked about, you know, making sure that we're checking in that student, that transition, right. Instantly giving them that trusted adult and establishing that connection in school to help monitor that's transitioning for district. So that's an instant, that's an instant doable.

Mr. Buono:

I think as the, as the works together, we as a Board, get together for Board retreat and discussion about our goals, objectives, and the scorecard leading those conversations.



Mr. Buono:

And to make sure that this kind of data, I'd love to see more in depth conversation about this at the Board level. So the community can hear more about it outside of the Education Committee, the comments, that committee level, because it is so important about these success stories and all that make to not only provide you say with Questar here, the opportunities are for programs. And it's also the opportunities for children and families who struggle to get them back on track. It's those investment in those programs to get them across the finish line so they can be successful as well. Okay.

Mr. Buono:

Next committee report.

Mr. Simons:

Yeah, I'm going to be giving a general overview, brief overview. Our committee on global education has met recently. This is a committee that has focused on diversity inclusion and equity. We've been meeting for over a year and a half now or so recently, The State Education Department came out with a policy document and a toolkit and guidance resource guide related to diversity equity and inclusion. We discussed that within our committee. The way that that document is organized from the State level is very similar to the way we've organized our planning within our committee. So the committee has agreed to use the State's resources to develop a written plan. We're focusing on areas of professional development, and we have a number of opportunities that are coming up next year.

Mr. Simons:

As well I've been offered online this year. We're also looking at ways that we can assess our curriculum to make sure that we are avoiding any type of bias within our curriculum. Additionally, we are looking at ways that we can welcome families that are new to the district through an ambassador program. And we have identified people within each building who could serve in those roles to help when a new family moves in, is familiar with East Greenbush, that can help them transition, to know how to access information, who to go to within the school district, but also within the community.

Mr. Simons:

So that that committee is continuing to work. There's a book study currently happening among a subgroup of that committee. One of the ideas that float out of that meeting came from John. I don't know if he wanted to speak to it, but where we're looking to revamp our website under the area of community and to really have a community resources' website. So you'd go on the district website and you know where to go for what in the Capitol region and have it be more reflective of the diversity of the resources that are available here. And it's something that I've talked to Mark Adam about, and he's working on that behind the scenes.

Mr. Dunn:

Add to that. One of the things that we talked about that level was the school districts, especially in this region is five towns. So we are the center of a lot of activity. We're attracting a lot of people, the businesses from all over. And we kind of assume that people, when you go to register your kid for school, it's a very sterile process. And we wanted to make it a more personal process. So that use our website and our tools to not only give people information that you don't have to really search for, and also identify resources that help people transition into the community, whether it'd be language resources, which is a really big thing right now. And it doesn't have to mean we refer them to the district

for our language resource, but there might be a community group. And I always think of one particular group of students my wife had, they were Ukraine.

Mr. Dunn:

And there was three girls that came that high school level and they spoke no English, and it was through the resources of a creating church and propose through an employee that we got them plugged into people that they could communicate with them. You can also identify with translators and different things like that. And I just, in our conversation, a lot of times the focus is what is different about people, but using our resources to what is our real common interest, and our common interest is students and families and, and success. And I, I think it's a great project overall.

Mr. Simons:

Thank you, John. We're also working on policies and procedures and Marissa is the chair of that group. And they're looking at ways to make sure that the code of conduct is inclusive and uses appropriate references on talking about that.

Ms. Cannon:

So our code of conduct meeting that last week and JoAnn Taylor and were on that committee meeting. It was very positive professionally with our two student representatives. They were very happy to see that we are going to be adding inclusive language and collaboration language within that code of conduct to make sure that all, you know, ethnic groups and all of our diverse employees and our students, that our community members are reflected within that code.

Mr. Simons:

Thank you. We also have a meeting with our Districts advocacy committee, but we've expanded participation in that committee too. For the last two meetings we've invited representatives from other districts, superintendents and Questar representatives, because we were planning a very important advocacy quorum, which will be a regional effort on June 2nd, from 7:30 to 9:00. It will be a virtual forum focused on school, full school opening in September. Mark Adam has worked with me to put together a very comprehensive schedule for that evening. And we've consulted with Dan Sherman, BOCES Director of Communications. We have representatives from more than just our District assigned to speaking roles, including two students from our district and board member from another district, myself, Dr. Cruz. And we're trying to communicate the need for all the kids to be back full time and for us to have the guidance now of how they want us to accomplish that.

Mr. Simons:

We've invited all of our State elected representatives. We've heard back from some of them to Jake Ashby, who has, was the first person to respond the Commissioner of Education, but Rosa has committed to attending that as one of the panelists. We've invited the county executives have the respect of counties within Questar to attend as well so they can hear the dialogue, and we think it will be a very informative program. All of the parents, students, community members are welcome to attend that because it's virtual even attended through the live stream. And again, we're hoping that that will lead to, or the governor's said this week that he would anticipate that schools would be fully open. That's a good sign, but we want to make sure that we know that's going to happen for sure. And we want to be able to put our plans together based on what other guidance we need to be ready in September.

Mr. Simons:

And so I think it will be an overall team effort on the part of our component districts within Questar. We sent out an invitation to the parents this week, and we'll be sending reminders out and I will be calling our representatives who haven't responded yet to make sure that they're aware of it, hoping that they can attend.

Mr. Simons:

Safety Committee met on May 14th. We talked about the climate survey that was done. We wanted to present that survey to the Board likely at our last meeting in June so that the public is aware of that. While we did the survey in the fall, we did look at the results and study the results through the Safety Committee. And we were very pleased with the results, but we'll also have some goals and objectives for further improvement that we'll present to the Board on June 23rd. And I think that covers all my committees

Mr. Buono:

Any questions for Jeff? Jennifer?

Ms. Massey:

Any update on the presentation to the county legislatures on the bus?

Mr. Simons:

Yes.

Ms. Massey:

Did that occur on Friday?

Mr. Simons:

Yes I am going to defer to Mark on that one because Mark organized that.

Mr. Mann:

So about, we did that very good meeting with the majority of the county legislatures were on the virtual meeting, as well as representatives from the Town of East Greenbush and the Town Police Department, and Jeff and Mark Noeth. It worked out very well. The county was very supportive of it. They've actually drafted up county law already. Legislation that they share with us. Kelly Hoffman and Tom Grant, we're really taking the lead on it. Asked questions to the company that were answered questions. We asked some questions, Jeff asked some questions, Jack Conway from town asked questions, and all the answers were provided. Everybody was pretty happy and pretty satisfied with the services and what they offer. So hopefully we'll hear from the county here. I did it with saying that the ball's in their court. You know that the district is interested, the Town of East Greenbush police department is interested, the in balls in the county's court. So I actually emailed them tonight saying "Hey thanks for joining in and what is your next process?" I know Jeff is going to send a letter. Jack Conway sent a letter to the legislatures saying, "Hey, we support this, let's move forward with it." It seemed pretty well.

Mr. Buono:

Thanks Mark. Any comments or questions on the committees? No, we're good. Next item is tabled motions. I don't have anything on that at this time. Old business, Board members, anything? Moving on to the consent agenda, items A through I, any questions or comments regarding those agenda, those consent agenda items? If not, any motion to approve consent agenda. JoAnn second, Jennifer, all those in favor? Approved. No addendums, any new business proposals? Nothing? Okay. We'll move to our second public forum. Linda, anything?

Ms. Wager:

No, there aren't any.

Mr. Buono:

Our second Board forum I'll start with my right. Frank anything?

Mr. Yeboah:

No.

Mr. Buono:

JoAnn? No. Mark? No. John? Good. Michele? Jennifer? I thank, just again, want to thank the committee for the support of the budget. Looking forward to the next few weeks as there's a lot of activities for our students and families. Looking forward to a successful elevations and graduation and participating in those activities as well. So with that, we do need to executive session for purposes of personnel and contractual items. I don't anticipate any regular board business after executive session. So I need a motion to approve going into executive session? Michele, second Frank All those in favor? All right. I want to thank everyone in the virtual world for attending and we'll see you next Board meeting. Thank you.

PART 5 OF 5 ENDS [02:21:11]