

Lorna James-Cervantes, President  
Sylvia Lazos, Treasurer  
Dr. Alain Bengochea, Secretary  
Nicole Thompson, Officer  
Jaime Gonzales, Officer  
Dachresha Harris, Officer  
Dr. Alee Moore, Officer  
Heather Nay, Officer

Miriam Benitez, Executive Director



**Strong Start Academy Board Meeting Minutes  
September 8, 2022  
5:00 PM**

Lorna: Okay. [Inaudible 00:00:01].

Miriam: Yeah.

Lorna: Okay. Good evening, everybody. It is September 8th and 5:00. We'll go ahead and call the meeting of the Strong Start Academy board to order at this time. So thank you all for being here, and hopefully you've all had a good month since our last meeting. At this time, we'll begin with roll call. Lorna James-Cervantes? Present. Alain Bengochea?

Alain: Present.

Lorna: Sylvia Lazos? She's present. Alee Moore?

Alee: Present.

Lorna: Dachresha Harris?

Dachresha: Present.

Lorna: Nicole Thompson?

Nicole: President.

Lorna: And Heather Nay?

Heather: Present.

Lorna: And Jaime Gonzales?

Jaime: Present.

Lorna: I skipped down the line. Sorry, Jaime. So all board members are present at the meeting right now, so we'll go ahead and move forward with quorum. At

this time, we are announcing that we are recording the meeting with compliance to Open Meeting Law, and we will move now to item number 3, public comment.

This is comment during this portion of the agenda must be limited to matters on the agenda for action. If you wish to be heard, come forward and give your name for the record. The amount of discussion as well as the amount of time any speaker is allowed will be limited to two minutes, absent board approval. Is there any public comment at this time? I do not see any here in the room, and we did not receive any written public comment. Okay. Thank you. So, we can move to item number 4 then.

This is the possible action to approve final minutes by reference of the July 21st and August 11th board meetings. So in your packet, the first set of minutes are from the special meeting that we had on July 21st, and the second set was from August 11th. So, hopefully, everybody had a chance to read through those minutes. If there are any concerns or questions, or need to be any changes, please speak up at this time. And if not, and you are ready to, we can also have a motion to accept the minutes as written.

Dachresha: This is Dachresha Harris for the record. I [inaudible 00:02:45] just add the date at the beginning of each of these, so even just for record purposes. So as we're keeping them, we know from what meeting they were.

Lorna: This is Lorna Cervantes. Thank you for that recommendation, Dachresha. I was just speaking to Amy before the meeting, and we noted the same thing, that we should have a date or header at the top of each one of the sets of minutes. So we will make sure that happens from now on. Are there any other corrections, questions, or comments regarding the minutes, or a motion to approve all sets of minutes as written?

Dachresha: This is Dachresha Harris for the record. Motion to approve both sets of minutes.

Lorna: Is there a second to that motion?

Jaime: Jaime Gonzales, and I second it.

Lorna: Thank you. So [inaudible 00:03:47] and seconded that we approve both sets of minutes from the July 21st and the August 11th board meetings. All those in favor? Jaime: Aye.

Nicole: Aye.

Alain: Aye.

Lorna: Any opposed? Okay, that motion passes and those minutes are approved. Thank you. All right. Now we are moving to item number 5. This is a report by the executive director and discussion regarding the status of student enrollment and the impact on staffing. So, Miriam, would you please go ahead and provide us with that update at this time?

Miriam: Yes. Miriam Benítez for the record. So, as of today, our enrollment is 78. And the purpose for bringing this up with the impact on staffing is because, of course, all of our teachers are from CCSD and they're well aware of Count Day. And if we don't meet our enrollment projection by Count Day, oftentimes we lose staff. So we have staff concerns about what that's gonna look like at our school and what the plan is. And, so, of course, this is not anything we have discussed. So we need to discuss it.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris for the record, for those of us who [inaudible 00:05:23] Count Day, can you explain what that means?

Miriam: Yes. So what happens is we have a projection. And based on that projection, we have to meet, I believe it was, like, 98% within that projection. So, obviously, we were projecting for 180 students, and we are currently at 78. And then we didn't fill a couple of vacancies. When we saw that enrollment wasn't increasing, we left some vacancies open, and then we moved teachers around. So, then what happens in the district is what's called surplus.

So, if at my school I was expecting 800 students, and I only had 700, then surplus happens and the teachers that I have in excess in my building, they get surplus to another building that has openings. So, you know, the district always has a shortage, so nobody loses their job. They just are absorbed by another building in CCSD. So that's why since we are just a school all by ourselves, and we know that from what the charter authority has told us, that we can expect to have students enroll all year long, but not, you know, exponentially. But that will be slow and steady.

And, so right now in kindergarten, we have 14 students in each classroom. So we have enough students there for all three teachers, because if we tried to merge any of those, it would be too many. And then in 1st grade, we have 17,

and in 2nd grade, I believe we have 18. So we're close to reaching that tipping point that we had promised that our classrooms would not be any bigger than 20. And so we're under 20 in 1st and 2nd grade, 17 and 18. And, like, we just had new students start today. So we are seeing enrollment, and we haven't stopped with our efforts to recruit. But, of course, since schools already started and it's well underway, we don't expect to get a whole bunch of students.

Lorna: This is Lorna. So is it 17 total students in 1st grade or 17 students per class?

Miriam: Total.

Lorna: That's what I thought I understood.

Heather: [Inaudible 00:08:00] only one?

Miriam: There's two. There's an English and Spanish. And so for right now what they're doing is their team teaching, because the other thing is, as we're wrapping up our assessments, we are finding, for instance, in our second grade, the great majority of the second grade students are at a kindergarten or first-grade level. So they're well below grade level. In first grade, we have a lot of students that are at Pre-K and kindergarten level.

And then, so those smaller classrooms obviously do help because had we been at capacity, 20 and 20, it becomes very challenging to try to, you know, get kids to move up to grade levels. But with these small numbers, we're confident that we can close that gap and we can do that. But, yes, this is where we're at.

Heather: One more question, when is Count Day?

Miriam: Count Day is in October.

Lorna: Okay. Thank you. Sylvia Lazos?

Sylvia: Can you outline to the board the recruitment efforts that went on before school started and the recruitment efforts that are now ongoing?

Miriam: Student recruitment?

Sylvia: Yes.

Miriam: So, as you all know, we contracted with Graphicka. And Graphicka had put out radio ads, ads on different social media, television ads. What else? We

had flyers. We also had the City of Las Vegas and AmeriCorps. They went out and did a lot of knocking on doors, canvassing neighborhoods. We also did tabling events at different stores. And Graphicka is still doing...of course, we've depleted a lot of our budget, but they're still doing some of these things. And...I'm trying to think if I've left anything out. No.

And from what we've learned from the charter authority that it's very typical for schools, their first year to start under enrollment. And some folks do hire professional recruiters, which, I think, would be worth it. However, I don't know that it would be worth it at this point in the year because everyone has kind of made that decision. So to consider hiring a recruiter maybe in the winter, and start trying to recruit there for the fall, that might be something that we consider doing.

I know from attending the charter authority board meetings that there was one school, I can't remember the name of it, that they had a really good enrollment this year. And when the board members asked them, "Well, what did you do to, you know, have such great enrollment, because everyone else is struggling?" and she said, "Well, as you remember, we were supposed to start last year, and we didn't have the enrollment. So we opted not to start, and we dedicated this whole year just to recruitment. And that's how we got that enrollment."

So it's a struggle that, I think, is a challenge for everyone. And we didn't...I really didn't realize it was gonna be that much of a struggle because we had so many people that had filled out our enrollment form, but so many of those people didn't follow through. So we thought we had at least 100, that they had sent in documents that we requested for enrollment and everything. And our kindergarten was completely full. And so we see that we're at 14 across, so we have 6 students that didn't show up in each class.

And, actually, it was a little more because since school has started, we've enrolled quite a few kindergartners, and in 1st and 2nd grade as well, because we had enough students to have at least...I believe we had, like, 12 to 13 we were anticipating in each 1st and 2nd grade class. And then a bunch of those students were no-shows.

Rocio: Rocio Martinez for the record. And I would just like to add a special challenge that Strong Start had was the location. So, because the location was...we could not just close for a very long time. I think it was until maybe June 20th where we could actually make it public where the school was going to

be. I know that prevented a lot of parents from completing enrollment information because we used to get all the phone calls here at the city, myself personally, and I would just have to tell them, "We're gonna be in the downtown area, downtown area."

But by June, a lot of parents want to know where their kids are going in a month. So I know that prevented a lot of families from enrolling. So I hope it's better next year. I think it will be knowing that parents will know where the school is, but I know the location was a key factor in families deciding to continue with Strong Start.

Miriam: Yes. And Miriam Benítez for the record. To Rocio's point, we had at least 30 of the parents that we were able to get in touch with because we did continue to try to make contact with all of these folks that had enrolled and were no-shows. And we counted at least 30 of them that said they had decided to go with another school because we didn't have all the information.

Lorna: Lorna Cervantes for the record. So, Miriam, what would your recommendation be? You've trained the staff, we've gone through the expense of training them, they're on campus. We've budgeted for the number of staff that are on place, and have the money and the budget for them. Am I correct in that? And so, what is your recommendation for us regarding staffing so that we can consider that recommendation as a board?

Miriam: So, yes, we have spent lots of money training in June and in August. And my fear is these are people that we've uprooted out of their school, brought them with us. And my fear is then next year, when we're recruiting and needing teachers, that word gets around, and it's gonna be difficult to convince anyone to come over if we start laying people off. So my recommendation would be to keep the staff.

I anticipate that we are gonna continue to receive more students, and the justification, I think, is also there when we look at the student data, and that we have a lot of gaps to close. And we have a lot of special ed students that we weren't anticipating, and a lot of our special ed students require push-in minutes as well as time with the special ed teacher. And so we are able to use a lot of, like, our specialist staffs. When they don't have direct specialist class, they are in supporting special education students in their classrooms. So everyone is definitely working, just perhaps not their full...what they were hired for. Other

duties as assigned is what they're doing when they're not doing directly what they were hired for.

Lorna: Jaime and then Sylvia.

Jaime: Jaime Gonzales for the record. So, just for clarification in terms of the impact of Count Day. So, Count Day comes in October. We have an enrollment goal of about 98% of that 180. So I'm inferring from the discussion that if we aren't at that goal, so roughly about another 100 enrollments, that that could be a trigger to lay off staff at some point in the school year?

Miriam: That could be if we didn't have the funding to cover that.

Jaime: Understand. Okay.

Miriam: Yes.

Lorna: This is Lorna Cervantes. And to answer a little more that, Jaime, I think what is typical is that a school would have to lose those positions because they wouldn't have the per-pupil funding to cover those positions. Because of the grant funding that we've received from the city, it is Miriam's beliefs that we would be able to cover the cost of those positions in the budget right now, and that's why she's making the recommendation that we would not lay off those positions but use those teachers to better support the students who are two to three years behind in order to get them up to grade level in this year, and then to be able to move forward from there. Did I understand that recommendation?

Miriam: Yes, you did.

Lorna: Thank you. Sylvia?

Sylvia: So, I think it is really a motion that is a two-part motion or maybe even a three-part motion in my estimation. First, I think we need from Miriam a budget estimate of the budget impact of what it means to continue full employment for the current staff if the enrollment numbers do not change from the current enrollment numbers.

So, I think, for the board to do its due diligence, we need to have numbers on the table. And they can be, of course, approximations which they would be at this point. So I think that the proposal is incomplete at this time. If Miriam can amend her proposal or illuminate us on the proposal, either herself or the

budgetary person that's coming up, I think that would help with the due diligence of the board. So that's the first item.

I think the second issue, to me, is ongoing recruitment. It is true, as Rocio is pointing out, that we were hurt quite a bit with the lack of certainty as to the location of the school. So it's not just that we are a new entrant into the market, it's that we had the huge disadvantage of not being able to tell parents where the school was going to be located. You know, of course, that's kind of a short-term harm for a long-term benefit. The long-term benefit is having a beautiful, wonderful, historical school of which all of us can be very proud, and certainly the investment of the city can also be amply justified by the location. But I think that means that we need to adjust our marketing expenditures.

We had a negative disadvantage. We weren't able to tell where people were coming from. So I think we need to adjust marketing. Whether it means a new marketing plan at this point for the next 30 days until October, or whether it means, like, all semester long, or whether it means that we reinitiate for next Count Day. You know, I'm looking again for a recommendation, whether that comes from Edgar or whether that comes from Miriam herself as the executive director.

But I would certainly consider shifting money to marketing and recruitment since that investment then gains us money in return. If we don't tell people about this wonderful school and wonderful opportunities, then it remains a hidden secret, and that is not our purpose or mission, to be a hidden gem. Our purpose and mission is to be a beacon in these communities where learning opportunities are scarce and are shabby. So we need to do a better job of illuminating the community, you know.

You know, it's kind of a third thing. I mean, I do think that we need to spread the word. We don't necessarily have to spend money, but I'm thinking of communities that are already very engaged in education. I'm thinking of La Luz del Mundo as an evangelical organization communicating with the churches in the areas. There's many, many things that, you know, we could volunteer as board members.

To me, we can go on radio and also continue to talk about the school, etc. But, I mean, again, it's not the function of board members to become marketers. It's the function of board members to ask the executive leadership of the school to come up with a supplementary marketing plan and then tell us how we can

support you. You know, I'm just articulating the willingness of the board to help and support in this respect.

Lorna: This is Lorna Cervantes. Thank you for that recommendation, Sylvia. And, of course, item number 5, this is really just a report and a discussion. So, I think that you've heard from the board our support of the plans that you're coming up with, Miriam, to serve the school and to make sure that we have staffing, students, and everything that we need for this school. And I think Sylvia has made some valid points that you could take a look at moving forward, from my perspective, too. So just consider those ideas moving forward.

Heather: Heather Nay for the record. If my opinion counts as anything, I love the staff that you have. My son adores every...you see him go up to everyone. And, so if we don't have to eliminate staff, that would be...on my son's part, I know personally my son, like, he gets attached to people easy. And he's not good with change either. So he kind of had a rough start in the beginning, but now he's grown to love it.

And, I mean, he comes home and he talks about teachers that I've never even heard of, Mr. Bustillo, Ms. Garcia, the Computer teacher. Everyone has made an impact on him already. So if we can just, like, maybe not eliminate staff so quickly and consider keeping them until something else is figured out, me as a parent, I know I would appreciate that, because you did a great job with every single one of the teachers. Thank you.

Lorna: Lorna Cervantes. Thank you, Heather, and, of course, your opinion counts. You're a voting board member and, of course, your opinion counts. Sylvia? You're on mute, Sylvia, sorry.

Sylvia: I'm in total agreement that we don't want to lay off any teachers. Absolutely. I mean, I think this is an investment in the most important asset that the school can have, and that's the teaching community. My comments are really directed towards what I would see as responsible decision making on the part of the board, and that is to keep the teachers involves a shift in budget, a change in the budget, which has to be approved by the board. And we have to have the numbers in front of us.

And, you know, my second suggestion was also a shift in the budget which has to be approved by the board, and that is a decision to invest more money in marketing and recruitment, or more resources in terms of our time and the staff

time in marketing and recruitment. But I absolutely do not think we should lay off anybody.

Heather: Another question. Heather Nay for the record. I don't know how charter schools work, but another problem is transportation. So there's, like, one car per family and, you know, usually the dad takes it to work. So I know that transportation is a huge problem for people going to a school that they're not zoned for. Is there anything in the future, near future, and maybe next year, the year after to provide transportation?

You know, I know they can't go individually to each house, but if there's, like, you know, a close point for each zip code, you know, that they can walk to to drop their kid off at a bus stop or something, I think that that would help. Because, like I've told my neighbors, and it's something and an idea that they love. Even my son started baseball, so I'm getting the word out to, like, all the moms at baseball, you know, that there's a school, but the thing is transportation. There's one car per family, and usually mom walks the kids to school.

Lorna: Yeah.

Heather: So I know that that's a huge issue.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris for the record. RTC has some programs that I've briefly spoken to Miriam about to help possibly with a vehicle for transportation.

Heather: Okay

Dachresha: So I'll look into some more information for that.

Heather: Perfect.

Female Speaker: That's good.

Lorna: Thank you. So, any other...Alee, Alain, Nicole, any comments? Alain?

Alain: Yes. I'd like to echo what's been said regarding revisiting our recruitment efforts. Specifically, I think that for next year, we should consider sending out flyers to the early childhood centers that surround Strong Start. I know that there's an Acelero Learning Center not too far away, and I know that there's some other early childhood centers that we might consider beyond the Strong Start preschools.

Lorna: Thank you. Jaime?

Jaime: Jaime Gonzales for the record. Miriam, question. You mentioned that [inaudible 00:27:02] was it 1st grade where you have 14 in each, or is it kindergarten?

Miriam: Kindergarten.

Jaime: So you had roughly six children drop out or not enroll? You anticipated more?

Miriam: Yes.

Jaime: In this discussion of recruitment, have you already, or is it feasible to reach back out to those families that sign the paperwork and we were expecting, and reach back out to them, say, "What were your concerns?" or sort of laying out what the situation is now in terms of location or any sort of transportation, what have you, so that they can factor that into whatever decision they may want to make later in the school year or for next school year? So, I guess, my question is, do you go back to families that, for whatever reason, opted not to enroll and try and re-recruit them?

Miriam: Well, we called, emailed, texted all of our no-shows, and not everyone was willing to answer. But those that did, the main reasons were...some of them were transportation when they finally did find out the location. Some of them were that they had just made the decision prior to us knowing the location, so they went with a different school.

And then we had a few that, I think, once their home schools, like a lot of our first and second graders...because kindergartners are different. Usually the schools don't know them. But a lot of the first and...I shouldn't say a lot. A few of the first and second graders, what they communicated to us was when their home school found out that they were leaving to a charter, their previous teachers called them and told them, "Hey, I'm moving to second grade next year so I'm gonna be your child's teacher. Come on back." So their home schools, once they got wind of it, they started recruiting and they were able to get those students back.

Lorna: And...Lorna Cervantes, I'll say that for the district, we told our principals to do exactly that because you don't want to lose kids to charter schools if you

don't have to. So we're all recruiting from the same field as students. So it sounds like...I apologize, Alee. Go ahead.

Alee: Alee Moore for the record. I think we're all on the same page about not letting any staff go. I think we would all support that. And I agree 100% that we need to look at a better recruitment and marketing plan, whether we stay with Graphicka or shop somewhere else. But I would definitely like to see a recruitment plan that includes, like, timeline, and media outlets, and all these things.

Because I think we should be really aggressive and figure out how to do this...how to backdate it to where...because a lot of parents start looking at charter schools and enrollment that happens in, like, the spring, early spring. So we need to be looking at this pretty soon and figuring out how we're going to put it out there that enrollment is happening for us, and then really ramp up those recruitment strategies as spring comes around. And then, of course, once summer hits, we should have numbers up. And I think we should really be aggressive with that, whether we use Graphicka or not, but we want to make sure that we have that and that whatever that cost is, we've got [inaudible 00:30:55] for the board [inaudible 00:30:56].

Lorna: This is Lorna. I would echo exactly what Alee just said. And I can tell you that the magnet schools within the Clark County School District start their lottery process in January, and the recruitment processes start actually in the fall. So I think as you're looking at and creating that timeline for next year, keep that in mind and maybe even try to echo that timeline just a little bit so that that helps us to know where we are. And being "aggressive" is a good word for, I think, what we have to do with our recruitment.

Now that we have our location and we've gotten so many other things under our belt, another recommendation might be to get some of our parents and our current students to give interviews for videos that we could put out on the website, or that we could get out to other parents in the community, because I think that it's one thing for the employees to speak out about the school. It's another when we have the students and the parents speaking up for us. So that can maybe be a consideration for the marketing plan as we move into next year.

And I would also strongly encourage us going ahead and seeking out a student recruitment specialist that would help in that recruitment for next year, so that we can hit those numbers and maybe even exceed those numbers next year.

Colleen: And staff, too.

Lorna: Yeah. And staff, as well. Yes. Colleen?

Colleen: Colleen McCarty, board counsel. I'm gonna take off my lawyer hat and put on my previous media hat real quick. You know, we have the dedication coming up, and that's a media event, or it can be. So you all might consider whether you wanna put a press release together and try to get some media outlets to come counter this thing, because that's free publicity, right?

Lorna: Lorna Cervantes. Great suggestion. Thank you for that, Colleen. And I know that Graphicka has experience in that area and has said that they could do that, so I think that'd be an excellent recommendation for us to take back to Graphicka. They should be able to get something out to us pretty quickly for the English and the Spanish news channels.

Rocio: Rocio Martinez for the record. So just an update on the dedication ceremony. We are working with our communications team and our public information officer is doing a press release for that day, so we're hoping media response and are attending the event.

Miriam: And we also know...Miriam Benítez for the record, that the...what's the station here?

Female Speaker: KCLV Channel...

Miriam: KCLV. They came out to the school and interviewed me, and interviewed parents, and they were waiting to release that until the ribbon cutting. They're gonna release it all together, and they are also gonna be at the ribbon cutting covering that.

Lorna: Great. Thank you. Well, it sounds like we've had a robust discussion on this topic and have given some suggestions that, Miriam, you can take back, and Kristin, as well, to really take a close look at in the next month or so. And I'm sure we'll have a similar item, but maybe it's an item for action if necessary, if you need it to be, depending on what you come up with in the next month. So I'm sure we'll see this agenda item coming back again at next month's meeting, or something similar.

Any other questions or thoughts on this item before we move on? Thank you so much, everybody. So at this time we'll move to item number 6. This is a report

by Kristin Dietz from EdTec on budget and financial report update, including the CSP grant. And Kristin is here.

Kristin: I sit here and talk? Does that work or should I move?

Lorna: No.

Kristin: Okay. Thank you. Nice to see everybody. Kristin Dietz for the record. Just to go over the presentation. This is actually my first formal presentation to you all, and we did do a forecast update. Miriam and I have made some changes, so I'll try to address a couple of the questions that have come up in the last discussion. If we can turn to page 4 of the presentation, there should be one in the packet. I think it'll be helpful to look at [inaudible 00:35:27]. This first schedule [inaudible 00:35:30] approved by [inaudible 00:35:32] in the current forecast in the middle column.

The current forecast is reflecting a net deficit of \$121,920. This compares to the approved budget which had just over \$1.1 million net income. The biggest changes there aside from enrollment adjustments, which I'll talk about in a moment, were the timing of the City of Las Vegas grant. So we did have \$900,000 received last year, and we had additional expenses this year that were earmarked to be funded by the grant. But we didn't spend all of the \$900,000 last year.

The approved budget had kind of a double up there. It had the remaining amount from last year, and again, that amount was included in the budget. So what we did is we rolled over whatever wasn't spent of the \$900,000. We rolled that over to apply to the current year's expenses and then we reduced the grant amount accordingly. So the total grant amount from City of Las Vegas is now \$1,837,000 in the current forecast.

In addition to that, we had a change in enrollment from the original budget, which was 180 students. We brought it down to 100. So we're still about 20 students off from where we are trying to get to. So this forecast with the deficit of \$121,000 is at 100 students. If we were to remain at the 70 or 80 students, that would mean an additional \$160,000 reduction. So just so everyone's aware. You would still end the year with a reasonably strong fund balance, and that is something that the authority and the state looks at in terms of considering your financial stability.

The fund balance in this forecast is \$670,000 or 19% reserve compared to expenses. If we were to look at it at the 80 students, that would be closer to probably \$500,000, which would be about a 15% reserve, which is still fairly good for a first-year school. So the grant is a significant help overall. So I just wanted to point that out.

Other changes that have been reflected, if you turn to the next page, this is what we call a waterfall slide. On the left-hand side, it shows the approved budget, and then the changes that happened to get us to the current forecast are those amounts that are being reflected from left to right. So we did have a couple of reductions of expenses based on just adjustments and what we knew were items that were needed or were not coming in as high as what we expected.

But we also have some additional costs particularly in compensation based on actual people hired, and the contracted costs, and the PERS expense, and everything. And then we have the reduction of the state PCFP funding, that is directly tied to the enrollment reduction, and then the CLV grant reduction that I spoke about previously. So that is the overall change that's getting us to the deficit of \$122,000.

Now, turning to slide 6. Each month I will share with you where we are with the grants. One thing that's really important to note is that the total revenues that the school will receive, about 75% of it is reimbursement-based, which means that we have to spend the money and then request a reimbursement, and wait. And sometimes that lag time can be as much as six months or more depending on the funding source. So that is one of the reasons why we've been kind of pushing to try to get access to some of the grant funding this month so that we can ensure that the cash balances remain strong to help us weather the cash flow challenge that these grants pose for us.

And the CSP grant is the only one that we've really spent as of July. This schedule is reflecting actuals only for the month of July since it was the first month. So each month, I will update this and you'll have a better picture of what's been spent and what is pending receipt. But as of July, we only had \$120,000 CSP grant that was pending. And we do have, all of the other grants are still in "pending approval" status with the authority. They have been approved by SPCSA but not by the state yet. So we are awaiting approval before we can start to submit reimbursement requests for those.

The next slide is seven. This will be included in the packet each month and it will just show you kind of how we're doing on an overall revenue and expense as a percent of, or as compared to the forecast. So as of July, we hadn't received hardly any revenue. I think we only had received one PCFP payment of \$25,000. So we don't have much to report there. On the expense side, we had incurred 3% of expenses. So this will be a good gauge to let you know if there's any concern of things going over budget or over forecast.

The next slide is slide 8. This is a standard financial report balance sheet. It reflects what the school owns and owes as of the end of the month, at a point in time, being July 31st. At the end of July, we had \$572,000 in cash. We had some receivables for the CSP funding that had been submitted prior to June 30th that we're still awaiting reimbursement on. And we had a little bit of accounts payable, and that was pretty much it. So it's not a lot to report there other than total assets being \$727,000.

The next slide is nine. This is our cash flow forecast. We will include this every month, and we do update and true it up based on latest info and actuals to date. So it will change as we move through the year. The assumptions that were in this forecast were that a bulk payment would be made on the CLV grant in September. And we know that's likely not going to happen, so this will change next month.

And in terms of what the need would be, ideally if that grant were to come either quarterly or even monthly, it would help with cash flow, and help us to maintain cash balances. As of today, the cash balance is about \$300,000. So it's still reasonably good, but when payroll hits, it definitely dips, and we just want to make sure that Miriam has the means to spend the CSP grant funding. And some of those are large. Some of those expenses are large. And there can be up to a 60-day [inaudible 00:42:27] on those. So that's kind of our main catalyst for the timing of the grant request.

The last slide here, 10, this is kind of a table or a graph of the financial performance framework. This is a set of metrics that the SPCSA uses to gauge the financial health of a charter school. And I just wanted to share with you based on this forecast, what it would look like if this year ended the way this forecast is reflecting based on the assumptions. So based on this, there would be three areas that would not meet the standards.

And those areas would be the enrollment not being what was budgeted by a difference of more than 5%, and the total margin being negative, and then also cash flow going down. So those are a couple of the areas that we would need to work on to strengthen in order for the school to get all positive marks on review at the end of the year.

And if we were to look at this based on 80 students as opposed to 100, my guess is that the day's cash on hand would also not meet the [inaudible 00:43:42] so that would be an item to look at. And then, beyond that, I don't know if they were printed, but we usually include all of the detailed financial reports, as well, for the board review, and check registers as well. So if you have any questions [inaudible 00:44:00].

Female Speaker: [Inaudible 00:44:16].

Rocio: Rocio Martinez for the record. As far as the CLV funds, the way we're working right now, so I've been in communication with Lorna and Kristin in regards to the funds from City of Las Vegas. We're trying to set up a phased approach system to just transfer the school in amounts of \$200,000 or less per the grant agreement with the city and Strong Start Academy. And these [inaudible 00:44:43] under \$200,000 [inaudible 00:44:46] department and director signature. So Dr. Malich would have the authority to transfer over that amount to the school. Over \$250,000 does have to go to city manager approval.

So, I know initially in this...we're trying to do on a phase transfer so there'll be more transparency, and CLV finance always has a lot of backup questions, you know, which was expected. And on this initial transfer where I'm working with the school, as it will be over \$250,000, I believe this first [inaudible 00:45:17], and then going forward, we will do the transfer, however works best for the school. And we'll be at \$250,000. But the city does plan to keep on fiscally supporting the school as well.

Lorna: Thank you for that. And that grant money then comes into the line that was the cash flow line, correct?

Kristin: Correct.

Rocio: It's the local revenue.

Lorna: Local revenue. Thank you. Are there any questions or concerns regarding the financial report? I don't see any at this time. And this item was

presented as an opportunity for a report. Oh, sorry, was there a question? Sylvia, sorry I didn't see your hand.

Sylvia: I put up my hand late, but I'm, again, concerned that we will need to approve as a board a revised budget. It's really a question for the attorney. When do you think we should be approving a revised budget given the new reality of our enrollment, and therefore not the revenues that we have been hoping for?

Colleen: Colleen McCarty, board counsel. Based on the discussion regarding the staff, discussion regarding the budget, I think perhaps it would be worthwhile to have some sort of a vote next board meeting to discuss the new realities and the figures associated with staff. If the board were to change its mind about keeping staff, when would that decision need to be made?

Miriam: So the state's Count Day is October 3rd. So sometime before then, hopefully. So...

Colleen: Our next meeting's not 'til October...it's...

Female Speaker: The 9th.

Colleen: The 9th. Yeah, I think we should have that on the next [inaudible 00:47:58] unless the board feels like the discussion about staffing needs to occur, at which point that would require a special meeting.

Lorna: This is Lorna. I think the recommendation that I heard in the discussion earlier was that we do everything we could to adjust the budget without reducing staffing. So I think that that was the informal discussion that we had earlier. But based on that decision, what we would need to see then at the October meeting is what our adjusted budget would be and what the necessary expenses would be coming forward, including the distribution of the City of Las Vegas grant. Does that sound correct to everybody?

Rocio: Rocio Martinez for the record. Kristin, if you could just clarify, maybe I understood incorrectly, but in your forecast for F [inaudible 00:49:03] 22/23, you already accounted for low enrollment, correct?

Kristin: Right. Kristin Dietz for the record. For 100 students. So it's still 20 off from where we were. But important to note is that the school get funded based on the weighted average across all four quarters. So if there is any increase, they will get additional funding at the end of the year. So we need to not only

consider the Count Day amount, but where we think you'll end at the end of the year, and the weighted average.

Rocio: And then in the...Rocio Martinez for the record. Also in this forecast, you're already projecting all salaries and fringe for staffing for the rest of the year, correct? If we kept staffing levels as they are as of today?

Kristin: Kristin Dietz for the record. Yes, I did. And almost all of those expenses are covered by the CLV grant. So if they were to go down, the grant amount would go down as well. So I don't know that there would be a net change in impact. It would just mean that more of the grant would push to next year and be available next year.

Rocio: Okay.

Lorna: Thank you. Sylvia?

Sylvia: Yeah. So it's kind of a follow-up. So, what is the bottom-line budget impact, if somebody can give us that number, of not getting more students by October? You know, can you just give us a number on that?

Miriam: It's \$160,000.

Kristin: Kristin Dietz for the record. It would be about \$160,000 of additional loss in net income.

Sylvia: And that would be covered in total by the grant?

Kristin: That's a tough one to answer because there's carryover from last year, and effectively, yes, it's getting absorbed by the carryover of the grant funds from last year.

Sylvia: Is that like a squishy gray answer, or is that like a black and white answer that you can take to the bank?

Kristin: That's a black and white answer.

Sylvia: Okay. You know, because lawyers, we specialize in gray answers, but accountants should not specialize in gray answers. Just black and white answers. That's a joke.

Lorna: This is Lorna. And thank you for the question, Sylvia. And I think that this further discussion helps us to better understand what that third column of

the current forecast is telling us, is that we are able to account for all of our salaries that are currently in place without reducing staff based on this current forecast. It's in the middle column on page 4. And knowing that we would have to dip a little more into that carryover fund if we don't get an additional 20 students.

Also, thank you, Kristin. You reminded me, and I was thinking this earlier when we received our report on enrollment, but I thought maybe I was wrong, that even though there is an official Count Day in October, the counts and funding actually comes four times during the year. So if we do increase our student recruitment efforts, then we could see an increase in our income from the state throughout the year.

That's why I would really recommend that we not hold up very long on continuing those student recruitment efforts, and continuing to get out there and say, "Are you happy where you are? If not, come here," because those average daily enrollments are taken all throughout the year. And thank you for that reminder because that helps us to reinforce that need to continue those student recruitment efforts starting today. Is your hand up, Sylvia, again?

Sylvia: Yes. And that goes, you know, to follow up on what you're saying that we need a revised recruitment plan ASAP, you know, because we can catch the next quarter if we start working today. I mean, that's investments in making sure that our budget is going to be healthier. So, again, I think, as a board, we need to see a revised recruitment plan as soon as possible.

Lorna: Okay. Thank you for that. So, I think what I request at the end of Kristin's report is that we could have a report at the end of next month's meeting with any necessary adjustments made to our budget. That would include any additional student recruitment, or marketing, or any other recommendations that you have at that time for us to consider, Miriam and Kristin, so that we can continue to get out there and just really work at that student recruitment while continuing our teacher satisfaction and recruitment, as well. So we appreciate this report and understanding where we are right now financially.

Are there any other comments or questions from any other board members? So, I wasn't sure if your hand is up or if you just forgot to put it down. Okay, you forgot to put it down. Thank you. All right, if there is no further discussion on this item, then we can go ahead and move on to item number 7 at this time. This is a report by the executive director regarding the pre-opening and conditional

approval of Strong Start Academy by the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority.

Miriam: Miriam Benítez for the record. And on the conditions that were placed, the only thing that we're still waiting on is a background check. But we anticipate receiving that maybe by next week, because as you all remember, last board meeting is the day that everyone did their fingerprinting. And so that was about four weeks ago. And the fingerprinting folks told us that it would be between a five, I believe, to eight-week process. So we are hoping that by next week, fifth week, we will receive some of the results of those background checks and then everything will be lovely.

Lorna: Lorna Cervantes. Thank you for that, Miriam. And just for verification, everybody who needed to be fingerprinted has been fingerprinted at this time that all board members who needed to get their fingerprints completed?

Miriam: I'm not sure if, Sylvia, did you get fingerprinted? So, I think she might.

Lorna: So if we can get you to do that ASAP, Sylvia, we'd appreciate it. Miriam does have the information for you on where to go, and any information you need for that. So, if you need that to be resent to you, please just reach out to her after the meeting. Thank you so much.

All right. We are almost through that checklist. Thank goodness for that. That's our one remaining thing. And I know that I also included in the backup for you on this item, the insurance that was needed as part of that. And, so all of our insurance is in place, as well, for our staff and for our board. So all of that is completed at this time.

All right, item number 8. This is discussion for possible action to engage with third-party vendor to provide technological services to Strong Start Academy and to authorize the president to execute any agreement properly [inaudible 00:57:00] there to.

Miriam: Miriam Benítez for the record. So, there are two different quotes that we have here. And what it is is this company and TeleTech, they work with many charter schools throughout the Valley. And they offer all kinds of services from provisioning laptops, or the student Chromebooks, to managing our Infinite Campus, managing our Google Education Workspace. And they charge four dollars per student. So it's very reasonable.

And then on top of that, the other two quotes are for our phone system. So the first quote that we had received from RingCentral, it shows that there is an annual payment for this phone service of \$5,546, and that also has a monthly installment for the phone service. Then we see total implementation cost of \$3,500, another monthly hardware rental cost. And then at the bottom, it shows you the total annual recurring cost, as well as the nonrecurring charges that we're paying.

So we have this quote, and then the Intellatek folks that, they had come in to give me kind of a quote on just IT services, but then we started talking about the phone services as well. So they gave me this quote that shows that it's a total of a \$10,000 quote, however, that's a onetime fee. We pay that once and we don't pay anything again, and we outright own the equipment. So there's no monthly on top of it. There's no recurring annual.

So, yeah, I just wanted to put it before you all so you could see the difference in cost, the RingCentral versus the Intellatek. That's for the phone. And then separate from that is just for the general IT services that they would be providing the school. That's basically at a cost of \$4 per student, unless we have them do things that are above and beyond, and they come at a pretty minimal cost.

Lorna: This is Lorna Cervantes. Just so I can make sure I understand for sure, so the first, the multiple-page one is for IT services. This would be management of our computer systems, our Google and so forth? And that's at \$4 per student?

Miriam: Yes.

Lorna: And then the other two single pages we have would be a comparison between RingCentral or Intellatek for the use of our phone equipment and then setting up phone service within the school itself?

Miriam: Yes.

Lorna: Just making sure I understood.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris for the record. So, I'm perusing this agreement for the Intellatek for the IT services, and I see a set of costs. But what's the cost? Just \$4 per student?

Lorna: Yes.

Dachresha: [Inaudible 01:00:32] dollars per month?

Miriam: If we do the cloud...

Dachresha: If we do the cloud?

Miriam: ...do a backup, that's an additional \$55 a month. I don't think we had discussed the cloud.

Dachresha: Well, we have to if we don't have IT on site [inaudible 01:00:51].

Miriam: So, from what we've talked about, there are certain things that...and I'm not a tech person, but certain things we get from, like [inaudible 01:01:03] and from...I think it's, I don't know, the Microsoft or the Google Education. So we get something from one of the others that he didn't think we needed this.

Dachresha: Another question. We're looking at the two estimates for the [inaudible 01:01:27] phone service. I noticed that RingCentral is giving you video facts, everything. That's all included in this, too, because the Intellatek just only says phone system. I just want to make sure that it's, like, a comparable system that you'll be getting through Intellatek.

Miriam: Well, I think what this video is so coincidentally...funny story. We had to be on a call with the NWEA, who is in charge of map testing. And they use RingCentral. So it's like Google Meets, or that's the system that they were using. And that's what they're talking about here for video. And we kept getting kicked off. And the person on the other end said, "Oh, that's this RingCentral. We've had issues with it." And, luckily, we only have about a month left. And I said, "Oh, good to know. Thank you."

Lorna: And you do have that access through Google Classroom?

Miriam: Yes. Through our Google Meet. We have Google Meets through our Google Education space.

Dachresha: Last question. Dachresha Harris for the record. I noticed they have a sales tax. We do have a tax exemption for that, right?

Miriam: So, we receive the IRS tax-exempt. And then from there we have to file with the state, which we already have. But we haven't received our state IRS, yeah, tax-exempt number yet. But Kristin did inform me that there is a process,

we just don't know it yet, we need to figure it out, that we can file with the state and all the taxes that we've paid, yeah.

Dachresha: Just to comment on the comparison of the two which we'll be getting [inaudible 01:03:27] also for the phone servicing.

Lorna: Yeah. Other comments or discussion?

Heather: Heather Nay for the record. I was just saying that I agree. I was thinking the same thing but you said it, so...

Lorna: Any other board members like to make comments or have questions regarding this, or somebody who'd like to make a motion?

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris for the record. Motion to proceed with the Intellatek for the IT services and the phone services.

Jaime: Jaime Gonzales for the record. I second.

Lorna: It's been moved and seconded that we approve the contracts with Intellatek as well as for both IT and phone services. All those in favor?

Alain: Aye.

Lorna: Any opposed? That motion passes. And if you need me to sign any agreements or anything before we leave here tonight, please let me know. And next, and I think Rocio started to give us a tiny bit of information here on item number 9 earlier in the meeting. This is a report by the executive director in City of Las Vegas regarding the ceremony to name the campus of Strong Start Academy as Tony Hsieh Education Center.

Rocio: Well [inaudible 01:05:09]. Rocio Martinez for the record. So, yeah, we touched upon this a little bit at the beginning of the meeting, but it's still scheduled for next Thursday the 15th at the school campus. It'll be at 4 p.m. So some of the Hsieh family will be present. We will have the mayor, and our Ward 3 councilwoman, I believe she also is going to be in attendance, and with some CLV staff present as well.

During the ceremony, the Hsieh family will be installing a plaque or a podium in honor of Tony Hsieh. And I have some pictures I can share with the board on how it will look like. If you visited the campus before, it's gonna be on the courtyard between the two main buildings. And it'll have...the plaque says

"Tony Hsieh Learning Garden." And it will be in three languages: "Learning Garden," "Jardín de Aprendizaje," and then in Chinese, because that is the family's language. So, I can show the plaque.

Lorna: Okay, good. Thank you. This is Lorna Cervantes. Did you say it's at 4 p.m. on the 15th?

Rocio: Correct. And then etched on the concrete of the courtyard surrounding the flag, they will also be putting in educational quotes, the favorite quotes by Tony Hsieh, and they will also be in three languages: English, Spanish, and Chinese. And I believe on the day of the ceremony, you'll be able to visually see where the quotes will end up being. And it's gonna be right there on the courtyard.

Lorna: Yeah. Just not like [inaudible 01:06:53].

Rocio: Yeah. They'll be laid out, and then you'll be able to see where they're gonna be in their final placement. And, yes, we hope to have media there. I know our public information office is sending out a press release. And like Miriam mentioned, our KCLV team will be there to do a spotlight on that. They will be able to help with the promotion of the school overall.

Lorna: Thank you. Anything to add, Miriam?

Miriam: No. I've been in contact with Dave from DTP, and he forwarded me the quotes. I believe there might be 16 quotes. And he sent 'em to me just because the one that he brought the sample was translated into Spanish and it wasn't a very good translation. So it said something about return on investment. So it was ROI, and they translated that exactly, ROI. And I said that doesn't make any sense. So then he sent me all the quotes so we can look 'em over to make sure that they make sense in Spanish. So I think there's a total of 16 of them.

Lorna: So, Lorna Cervantes for the record. So any board members who are available to attend the event on the 15th, we would appreciate your participation in this event. I know that we would be there as participants following Miriam's lead, and those of the councilwoman or council members, and the Hsieh family, but definitely anyone can be there to support [inaudible 01:08:42]. And there will be parking for board members in front of this...?

Rocio: Available. Mm-hmm.

Lorna: Okay. Get your phones out. All right. Thank you. Are there any other questions or comments from any of the board members? I would just also say that this is a great opportunity for the school. Wonderful that the city has been able to complete this work. I know it was hard work, so we thank you. On behalf of the school and the board, I would like to thank the city for their perseverance, and in this matter of purchasing this school, and really working through. I know it wasn't an easy negotiation process. Thank you, Colleen, for that, as well. And we know that this is the right thing for our students and our families, so we appreciate all of the hard work.

At this time, we'll move to item number 10 then. This is citizens [inaudible 01:09:43] public comment. During this portion, the agenda must be limited to matters within the jurisdiction of the board. No subject may be acted upon by the board unless that subject is on the agenda and is scheduled for action. If you wish to be heard, come forward and give your name for the record. And again, there's nobody in the room at this time, and I don't think we received any public comment online.

For our next meeting, I would like to just make a request that maybe we could have a starting academic report for where we're starting the year so that we can then take a look at what our goals are and how that starting point meets our goals, because I know one of the things the board should do is always make sure that we are on track with meeting our academic goals as well as our financial goals. So if you could maybe prepare that for us, Miriam, I think we would appreciate seeing that starting point. And with that said, at this time, we can adjourn the meeting. Thank you, everyone, for your participation.

Jaime: Thank you.

Miriam: All right.