

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



Miriam Benitez, Executive Director

Strong Start Academy Board Meeting Minutes

Strong Start Academy

March 09, 2023

5:00 PM

CLV Strong Start Academy Elementary Schools, Inc. Board Meeting – March 9, 2023

Lorna: All right. Good evening, everybody. At this time, we'll call the meeting of Strong Start Academy Elementary School Board to order. It's 5:03 p.m. We'll start tonight with a roll call. This is Lorna James-Cervantes, for the record. Jamie Gonzalez.

Jamie: Present.

Lorna: Meli Pulido.

Meli: Present.

Lorna: Heather Nay.

Heather: Present.

Lorna: Alain Bengochea.

Dr. Bengochea: Present.

Lorna: Nicole Thompson.

Nicole: Present.

Lorna: Dachresha Harris. Not present at this time. Alee Moore.

Dr. Moore: Present.

Lorna: All right, thank you, we do have a quorum for the meeting. And I see Dachresha Harris is logging in right now, so she is present at the meeting. Hi, Dachresha. All right, so we have all board members present at this time. And in compliance with Open Meeting law, I'm announcing at this time that we are recording the meeting. We'll move to item number three on the agenda. This is public comment. During this portion of the agenda, items 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. I do not see anybody in the room. Do we have any written or call-in public comment at this time?

Woman: We do not.

Lorna: Okay, having none, we will move to item number four at this time. This is for possible action to approve the final minutes of the February 9th board meeting. Did everybody get an opportunity to review the minutes prior to the meeting tonight? Yes? Okay, are there any corrections or comments concerning the minutes? If not, I'd be happy to hear a motion to approve. Yes, go ahead, Meli.

Meli: I just have a correction of my spelling of my name on page one. Melida, M-E-L-I-D-A, Pulido, P-U-L-I-D-O.

Lorna: Okay. Okay, thank you, Melida. Are there any other corrections or additions to the minutes at this time? Okay, hearing none, then we could have a motion to approve the minutes as amended.

Jamie: Jamie Gonzalez, for the record. I move that we approve the meeting minutes from the February 9th, 2023 meeting as amended.

Lorna: Thank you. Is there a second?

Meli: Meli Pulido, for the record, and I second.

Lorna: Thank you. All those in favor?

Together: Aye.

Lorna: Any opposed? Sorry. Any opposed? Okay, that motion is approved as made and we'll make sure that the spelling of your name is corrected, Meli. Thank you for pointing that out. So, now we will move to item number five. This is a report by Kristin Dietz from EdTec on the budget and finance reports, including the CSP grant.

Kristin: Okay. Hi, good afternoon, board members. This is Kristin Dietz for the record and I am going to try to share my screen. Here we go. I think you can see the presentation now.

Lorna: Yes.

Kristin: So, what we have today is the financial presentation with actuals through January and our updated forecast and we also will be talking a little bit about the upcoming budget and assumptions that we have so far. So, in terms of the current forecast, we're now forecasting net deficit of \$124,911. This is a reduction of about 26,000 from our new revised board-approved budget. We are still expecting a large fund balance reserve carryover, though, of about 21.2% of expenses. So, while we have a deficit, it is really because we are utilizing some of the grant funding that we had to recognize last year, so no real concerns there as long as our overall fund balance is remaining strong, which it is.

And our main change this month had to do with some cleanup that we did around the food program. We finally had some ongoing monthly activities of food costs and we were able to do analysis of how much the program is costing. And overall, we did find that there was a little bit of over-ordering happening and the overall costs were higher than what we had budgeted. So, we made that correction this month and that's really the only major change that happened this month. In terms of our year-to-date actuals versus forecast, we have received 54% of our forecasted revenues as of January 31st and we've incurred 48% of expenses. And this is now seven months into the fiscal year, so we are really trending on track with what we would expect at this point.

And in terms of our balance sheet, we have total assets as of January of \$977,103. That's mostly made up of cash, we had a cash balance of \$940,000, we have a little bit of receivables, and one other asset and that was everything for assets, a little bit of accounts payable, and the rest is our fund balance. In terms of our cash, as noted, we had a total cash balance of \$940,000 and we are expecting to end the year with just over 400,000 in cash, which will equate to 48 days cash on hand. And that's right in line with the metrics that the authorizer expects, they want to see at least 30 days cash on hand, so you guys are expected to be in good shape at the end of the year. In terms of the grants, we are still seeing a delay in approval of the Titles I through IV.

However, we did finally get the federal IDEA special ed funding approved this month and we did just submit that reimbursement request this week for the full

amount...for the amount of \$9,092. So, we still have...let me see if I can read this right. Yes, the amended grant amount is \$9,092, of which we fully spent it. So, we should have no more remaining and hopefully, we'll see that reimbursement come in next month. In terms of the CSP grant, we did get updated reimbursements received, we have nothing pending at this point. This week, we are submitting the February expenses, which equate to about \$55,000. And in terms of our ESSER grant, I just saw another school receive this funding this week, so I anticipate that we will see your reimbursement come in very shortly, and then we will also be submitting for this in March.

So, overall, the grants that have been approved are moving along a little bit quicker than they had been in the past but we do still have an issue with not being able to submit reimbursements on those titles. In terms of the CSP grant, we have expended...or, excuse me, we have submitted and expended 42% of this grant, so we still have about \$434,000 remaining. And this is just a bit of a summary by major budget categories, so you can see what remains. The biggest bucket here is the professional development, which I know is expected to happen over the course of the next year and a half or so. The grant expires in July of 2024, so you do have all of next fiscal year to spend down this grant. Any questions on the forecast before I move on to the budget discussion?

Lorna: Kristin, this is Lorna. Just one quick question about the Titles. Have we been given a reason why those Titles haven't been approved yet? Or are we just still waiting on the state to complete the work?

Kristin: Yeah, it's really just a tough situation because SPCSA is a sub-recipient and they've done their part to approve it and then they pass it on to the state and the state does the same amount of diligence that SPCSA did on those grant funds. So, it's just there's a bit of a delay with the state finalizing the approvals. I did speak with one of the representatives of SPCSA about a month ago, and she really didn't have any update on when they would be approved. It is definitely a challenge, though, for the new schools.

Lorna: Thank you.

Kristin: Okay, so moving on to the fiscal year '23-'24 budget. So, at this point, I have been meeting with Miriam and we've been getting our assumptions together for next year's budget. In terms of timeline, we do have to submit a tentative budget to the authorizer and to the state by April 15th. This budget does not require board approval. It does need to be reviewed by the board,

though, and we will have that information for you at the next board meeting. Then we go through the process of continuing to update the budget and we will have a final budget for you in May and it will need to be approved and submitted to the authorizer into the state by June 8th.

So, at this point, we really are just starting to put together our assumptions around what we want to include in next year's budget. And knowing that there are decisions that need to be made prior to the budget being passed by the board and by management, we wanted to just let you know what assumptions we have in here and what the results are looking like at this point. So, that's really the purpose of this discussion right now. In terms of our revenues, what we have in the budget is our enrollment is based on 180 students compared to our current year enrollment, which is at 85.

And for our federal revenues, we have all of the titles being based off of the per-demographic student rate that they were funded at this year. So, with the increase in enrollment, we'll see an increase in those funds accordingly. So, those are the assumptions that we're using for the federal revenues. We do have the CSP grant expenditures that are expected to happen next year matching the revenues. And then the one-time ESSER funding, we don't anticipate that continuing. So, that goes away. In terms of state funding, the PCFP base revenue, that is the main per-student revenue that we get in Nevada, and it's currently based on \$7,293 per student. And right now, the governor's proposal includes a pretty significant increase in that funding of up to \$2,000 per student over the next two years.

But the information that we're getting is that it will be spread across the two years and the likelihood ...if everything passes as is hoped, the likelihood is that the increase for next year would be in the neighborhood of \$1,000 to \$1,500 per student. So, what we've included at this time is a 10% increase in that funding, which is a \$730 increase. So, it's on the conservative side but again, it is very early, we don't know what's actually going to be passed, we don't know what's going to happen with the negotiations that are ongoing right now. So, at this point, this budget is including an estimated 10% increase in that funding.

And then because you will now be a continuing school with some history, you will now also be getting some of this weighted PCFP funding, which is based off of your ELL population and your free and reduced population. So, those funding streams will begin next year and we have estimates in there based on

what we typically see the amount per student being for those demographics. So, these are estimates but they're probably pretty close to what we would expect to see. And then also for State Special Education, that is based on prior year's special ed counts. So, again, because we are now in Year 2, we will now be able to access that funding as well, so we've included that based on the fiscal year '23 special ed counts. Also included in the revenues is the City of Las Vegas grant funding that we had budgeted for Year 2 and related expenses.

And when we move to expenses, what I've done is I've just given you kind of big buckets of expenses here so you can see some of the major assumptions. Our salaries and benefits make up about 55% of our overall budget. And what we've included at this point is an estimated 5% increase in all salaries, and also an increase in staffing in accordance with the increase in enrollment. And we've also included a placeholder in here for some estimated retention or signing bonuses, so that number is \$55,000 at this point in this model. We've also included an estimated 5% increase in health and welfare benefits cost per employee. And we've included what we now know to be the PERS rate for next year, which will be an increase from 29.75% to 33.5% for the 100% employer plan, and from 15.5%, it goes up to 17.5% for the shared plan. So, those are included as well.

And then the other major items here are really either contracted expenses or operating expenses that are based off of what we saw this year and adjusted for increases in enrollment or other things that we anticipate will increase expenses. And then a large percent of the curriculum and IT costs are all the remaining spending on the CSP grant. So, with those assumptions, what we're seeing for fiscal year '23-'24 is a total revenue of \$3,220,588 and total expenses of 3,197,570, for a net positive result of \$23,018. And that would bring us to a fund balance reserve of 21.66% at the end of the year. So, this is, again, kind of just a quick overview, but we wanted you to be aware of kind of what we're looking at and what the result would look like with these assumptions. But we do anticipate having continued conversations over the next few weeks as we work through the tentative budget. Any questions?

Lorna: This is Lorna. Kristin, I do have one question on the assumptions where you say unduplicated EL or free or reduced lunch. That means basically non-stacked weighted funding, so the students are only counted once in the weighting where it was their highest percentage, is that correct?

Kristin: That is correct. And they'll be counted first at the highest funded revenue source.

Lorna: Okay, thank you. One of the recommendations, just for the information for the board and something that if you're asked an opinion on, the English Mastery Council actually presented a proposal to the state board that we should actually look at stacking weighted funding for students. Schools are held responsible for student outcomes in multiple categories, like one student could be counted as a boy or a girl, as an ELL student, as a free and reduced lunch student, and as a special ed student. They're held accountable for students in all those categories, but only funded for them and given the additional support for those students in one area.

So, as the legislature is going through, if you're asked for an opinion, I'm just giving you this information and you can make your own decisions and put out your own opinions either way. But I would suggest that some people who've worked in this area have suggested that way the funding should be stacked so that schools receive funding in all of those areas rather than just one. But it's smarter for us right now to budget as unstacked funding, so I'm glad, and thank you for that clarification. Kristin. Any other questions or comments for Kristin at this time?

Okay. Hearing none, I want to say, Kristin, that we really appreciate this information and all of the support that you give Miriam. I am so glad that we as a board decided to bring you on to support Miriam through this work. I can say that not being a financial expert yourself as a principal, it always helps out the support of somebody who really understands what to do. My only other question is maybe more for Colleen in this matter and that is do we need to bring back maybe in April a budget item where we discuss salary increases for next year?

Colleen: We've got that on today.

Lorna: Oh, we do have that on today. Sorry, we do. I looked at that and then I said, "Okay, nevermind." I apologize, I'm getting ahead of myself, or behind myself, one of the two. All right. Thank you. And in case I didn't note it earlier, I want to make sure that we did note that both Alee and Dachresha are here in the meeting today. All right, thank you, Kristin. We appreciate your report. And now we will move to item number six. This is a report by the executive director on the status of ongoing marketing efforts, open enrollment, and recruitment.

Miriam: Miriam Benitez, for the record. So, currently, we have 65 students who have applied for the school. Thirty of those students have confirmed. As our marketing efforts, we are supposed to launch, as a matter of fact, tomorrow, our social media campaign. We have some tabling events that are coming up. Actually, this Saturday, we have one within Ward 5. And also when we get to the discussion...I think it's item number eight, the CSP grant, those of you that...if you had an opportunity to read that report, they support us with anything that they think we need help with, that we're struggling, that is a challenge.

So, they partnered us with Bloomwell Group, which is a student recruitment company. They help us with strategies. So, I've already met with them once, and I've connected them with Grafika so that they can work together to help improve our student recruitment strategies. So, we're still moving forward. Every day we get new applicants, and hopefully, working with the Bloomwell Group, they will give us strategies to even further increase them.

Lorna: Okay, thank you. Any questions or comments by any of the board members for Miriam?

Jamie: Jamie Gonzalez, for the record. What or which social media platforms is the campaign going to be launched on?

Miriam: It is going to be Facebook, Instagram, and I can't remember the third one off the top of my head but let me look it up on my email.

Lorna: Is it Twitter, because I know we have an account?

Miriam: It might be Twitter, let me just be sure. So, as a matter of fact, we have no commercials, so he sent me those and I'll be happy to forward them. But we've been back and forth because obviously, we have the waivers and I need to check all of the commercials and the flyers to make sure those are the students we have waivers on. So, we've had to change a few of the pictures but I'll look that up and then report back as soon as I find that third social media.

Jamie: Thank you.

Meli: This is Meli Pulido, for the record. Miriam, is one grade level more represented in enrollment than the other?

Miriam: Yes. Miriam Benitez, for the record. Kindergarten.

Meli: Kindergarten.

Miriam: So, the great majority of the students that have enrolled are in kindergarten. Oh, and I forgot to mention that, Amanda and I also went and presented at one of the Exelero, the Strong Start pre-Ks, and we've got a couple more presentations coming up this month. But we get a lot of students from the Strong Start pre-Ks, and really, students are coming from all over. And one of the things, now that you brought that up, that I think we probably need to consider as a board need to maybe put this as a future agenda item, I think everyone is aware that in the state of Nevada, they change the age...that kindergarten students, they changed it last year.

So, they moved it...it used to be September 30th and they changed it to the first day of school. So, depending on what your first day of school is, is whether a student can start or not. So, as you all know, our calendar last year, we tried to mirror it as closely as possible with CCSD because we only go from K to 2nd. Obviously, the other students are in CCSD schools and we wanted not to have parents struggle with various calendars. But when I went to the School Choice Fair, one of...what some of the other charter schools were doing is offering an assessment...or, well, offering schools.

If you can show that the school is...the child went to pre-K, and then we give them an assessment and they can pass that assessment, they allow them to start school if they fall within that because people are still kind of in the mindset of that September 30th date. So, we have quite a few students. I think we're at about six that fall within that September 30th but past our first day of school. As a matter of fact, one of them, their birthday is the very next day, August 8th. So, we probably want to have that conversation to see if we are willing to do something like that because there's kids out there that fall within that and they're interested in our school and if they are ready, we may want to consider that kind of early entry.

Lorna: So, this is Lorna, just to make sure I understood that correctly. So, if a student turns eight after the first day of...not eight, five after the first day of school then...between there and September 30th, then we would give them a test of their basic skills to see if they qualify to enter kindergarten? Okay. All right, just making sure I understood what you were saying. So, that would be a future...okay. And Tammy?

Dr. Malich: Tammy Malich, City of Las Vegas, for the record. I would suggest that this board consider making that a future, future agenda item because there's

legislation by the Nevada Department of Ed in this session, and it looks like it's pretty strongly in favor that they're going to change it again to August 1. They found that with every school in the state having a different start date, it created a lot of confusion, so they're looking at standardizing it again. And right now in the legislation that was proposed, it's August 1. So, I would hate for you guys to come up with some decision and nail yourself down to a date and then it changes.

Lorna: Thank you for that recommendation, Tammy. So, we'll keep that in mind as we're moving into future agenda items. We'll wait and see maybe? Unless anybody has a problem with that, we'll wait and see what happens in the legislative session with that, knowing that it may have a big impact. All right. Thank you, everybody. Any questions? Other questions for Miriam with regard to the marketing and open enrollment and recruiting? Good, seeing none, we'll move on to item number seven.

Dachresha: Can you hear me?

Lorna: Dachresha, did you have a comment or question?

Dachresha: Yeah, I have a question, and forgive me if I missed it but, Dachresha Harris, for the record, the 30 out of the 65 students, are those new students or students who are already enrolled?

Miriam: Miriam Benitez, for the record. No, these are just new students. We are in the process now of our existing students, of getting them to register for next year, so we don't have that number yet but that 30 is just brand-new applicants.

Lorna: Thank you. All right. Thank you, Dachresha. Any other questions? All good questions, thank you so much. All right, at this time, we'll move to item number seven and this is a discussion for possible actions to adopt the proposed financial policies and procedures that were presented. You do have a copy of this in your backup materials. And there were a couple of items that Colleen had pointed out to me earlier that she thought would be worth bringing to our attention for possible discussion by the board. So, at this time, I'll turn it over to you, Colleen, if you wouldn't mind.

Colleen: Thank you. Colleen McCarty, board counsel, for the record. So, most of these are general sort of standard policies. There's nothing outrageous here. We've got a policy for how we're going to manage the grants and ensure that the

monies are being expended appropriately and accounted for. Cash management for when we have student activities funds, and parents or kids are making payments to the school for whatever reason. In those cases, there's going to be receipt books that are numbered, sequentially numbered so we track of anything and one person is counting the money, it's a two-count system. Ensuring things are in a lockbox and somebody doesn't walk away, sort of cash management.

Records retention, we're going to adopt what the Charter School Authority recommends, which is seven years. Federal programs, again, comes back to largely our grants and how we keep track of those. Purchasing and procurement, how we go about awarding contracts, find things, selecting vendors. It referenced in here our conflict of interest policy, which all of you have signed on and which Ms. Pulido is signing today. But the one area I thought where there probably should be some discussion is number 6 on page 17, purchasing and procurement. And this talks about engaging in services of consultants in the amounts of over \$50,000 and under \$50,000.

Wanted to talk to you all about whether you're comfortable with that number, if that's too high. We've got sort of two things to weigh. One is operational efficiencies, we don't want the executive director to be hamstrung by having to bring something to the board that he or she may need to address immediately. But at the same time, that's a lot of money. So, the way that it is set up now is that anything over \$50,000 requires board approval, anything over \$25,000 requires approval by the executive director and the president. We can also loop in the treasurer there if the board wanted to do that. So, I invite any thoughts anybody has about that.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. So, I guess for me, it will be understanding how the procurement process will work. So, you know, is it just the executive director making the decisions for anything under 50,000? Is there some requirements that we have to have multiple quotes for anything under 50,000? Like, what are the parameters for the executive director to make the decisions?

Colleen: So, there are...depending on the amount, there are, you know, multiple quotes. In particular, this is dealing with engaging the services of a consultant. As, you know, we've dealt with during the discussions, many of these consultants, there aren't a whole lot of options out there. Different consultants have very specific areas of expertise. So, I think when there are opportunities to

get, you know, multiple bids that's provided for, it's not always the option. So, at this point, if it's 25,000 or less, Miriam is empowered to make the decision on her own. If it's between 25,000 and 50,000, it would require the president of the board and the executive director, and then if it's over 50,000, it will require board approval. Does that answer your question?

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. And so, we're looking for a consultant to perform this procurement process. But in the meantime, these are just the parameters that we want to give the executive director while we're going through that process, is that correct?

Colleen: Well, so it depends on what it is, right? So, if you look at Section 5 for purchasing and procurement where we're talking about buying things, buying goods, then there are parameters for anything we buy over \$200 for a technology item, you get three quotes, right? Because goods, you can always, you know, review various places to purchase things. When it comes to paying consultants, so this would be things like the consultants that are providing professional training, the consultants that are providing guidance with regard to our bilingual programs, those kinds of things, there aren't necessarily three or four providers out there to get a quote. But certainly, when there are multiple consultants, that we're taking the opportunity to look for those and find the best price.

Dachresha: Okay.

Colleen: So, really, the question is, if we're spending money on a consultant, you know, what amounts are people comfortable with empowering the executive director to do on her own? What amounts are people comfortable empowering the executive director plus the board president, or the board president and the treasurer? That's really the question, I think.

Dachresha: It is. Dachresha Harris, for the record, I understand that but I'm also just trying to think of how we protect the executive director from any challenges with anyone feeling like she's making certain...you know, like things like vendors or anything, just so there's no question that it's a fair process of however she's doing her business. You know, just thinking it from dealing with procurement in the public environment and knowing that there's often challenges when a company feels like they weren't given a fair opportunity, so that's why I'm asking about the parameters for Miriam as she's making these

decisions to make sure that she's protected from anybody challenging any decisions that she's making.

Lorna: This is Lorna, one of the things I noticed under the bullets too is that whenever she's making those decisions, it says that it has to be reviewed by a panel composed of the grade level leads and ensuring the recommended name shall be submitted to the executive director. So, making sure...I think that's one of the steps is making sure that her leadership team is involved in that decision-making too, so it's not just Miriam herself or whoever the executive director is making that decision as a sole individual, but they have to include their team.

I hear your concern, Dachresha, with, you know, giving multiple people bids for things. But there may not always be more than one person who does a specific area when it comes to this type of consulting work. Not that it matters, but I will tell you that this pretty closely mirrors the work being done within CCSD and other school districts, like those limits are very similar. Nothing that is below \$50,000 for one vendor has even been taken to the board for CCSD, so the schools can make those decisions for purchasing. I also don't know if it says in here, but I know that Miriam has had Colleen look at contracts on any orders before she has signed those. So, I don't think it says it in here but that's just a best practice she has followed.

Colleen: Well, and if you all have some thoughts on the best way to do that, or Miriam, maybe you could speak to how you've identified some of these, we can certainly incorporate that too.

Miriam: Well, Miriam Benitez, for the record. This is a good conversation because a lot of the folks that have been identified that we've worked with were identified early on during the grant writing process. So then, at that point, you're kind of locked in to use them. So, as we're having this conversation, I'm thinking when we are writing grants, which happens a lot, everything is paid for...almost everything through grants, are we supposed to then submit this process before we even submit through the grant because it's being paid for the grant? But if it's over however much, 25,000, 50,000, then we would have to go through this process before we even submit the grant?

Colleen: I'm not sure I followed that. So, you're asking if we need to get the approval before you apply for the grant or before you submit for payment through the grant?

Miriam: No, before we apply, because when we apply, it asks you for budget details and what are you planning to use the money on. And so, to answer your original question, a lot of how did we select, we selected because, in our original grant application, we detailed everything we wanted to do, we had to get quotes, and we submitted all of that with the grant that got approved. And Tammy has her hand up back there.

Dr. Malich: Tammy Malich, City of Las Vegas, for the record. However you as a body decide to write it is fine but I will tell you this, as a department that has secured a lot of federal grants and we're currently program managing them, if it is listed in the grant, if you identify a vendor or a partner or a specific product in the grant, you're bound then by the grant. So, you guys have to know that going in. Like even the EDA grants, which are the most challenging to work with, once we identify we're going to use XYZ Tables, they approve it under those parameters. And if we pivot, we've got to go back and get the federal program manager's approval. So, I would just caution you to know that going in. If you're going to identify a curriculum or a speaker or a product in a grant, then you're kind of bound at that point.

Colleen: Thank you, Tammy. Colleen McCarty, board counsel. So, as you're filling out grant applications, operationally speaking, is it possible to come back to the board if it's an amount over whatever amount we decide to have that discussion? Or is that not realistic given these constraints?

Miriam: It is very unrealistic, just because...like those grants that Kristin was going over, that is Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV, and those are all due at the same time. And so, you're gathering all this stuff and writing and going back and forth. And so, the timeline to get all of that done and then...you know, it has deadlines, and then to come in and get that approved, it would be very challenging.

Dr. Moore: Question. Dr. Moore, for the record. Are those grants not able to be forecasted? Do they come up at the same time every year so that you can plan ahead?

Miriam: Well, since this is our first year, I'm not quite sure but I know that we don't...and Kristin can probably speak better to this because she's had experience with other schools. But I know by the time...sometimes they release and the turnaround time that we have to submit things is not very long.

Dr. Moore: Right, right. Yeah, I get that, I definitely get that. I just wonder, are you able to forecast, maybe they come out around the same time annually or what have you, so that you can plan for them and you know that they're approaching?

Kristin: This is Kristin Dietz, for the record. The authorizer is using a new system, and so this is the first year that we have gone through the process with them for both continuing and new schools. So, the hope is that it will be consistent from year to year but this was a completely different processes here. So, yeah, the hope is that we would have a generally consistent timeline but we don't know that for sure.

Lorna: This is Lorna, I can also say that after working as an administrator for 15 years and working with these different grants that it all depends on when the State Department to decides to release things and that, I've never seen a super consistent timeline for. The best thing we could do is recommend to Miriam that, as she's doing her planning for the coming year, that maybe she could create a wish list of where she thinks she might go if certain grants come and ideas for what vendors she might be using, if they're going to be in excess of whatever amount, it has come to the board. But also what we don't want to do is have her not use the best resource because she has to come back here. So, hoping that if she follows all the process using her...this is my thought, I'll say that.

And so, if she uses all of the best practices of engaging her team in the conversations and doing the work ahead of time, getting the quotes, that we're going to trust...that I would trust her as a professional to bring us the very best vendor for the price she can get. And then once we know that we have the grant secured, then know that we could trust her to move forward in that work. But that's just my thought on that because I can say, "You can have a wish list," it was always something that I would do in the back of my head, a little list, but you don't know always when those grants are coming.

Miriam: Yes, and the other thing, Miriam Benitez, for the record, that I experienced this year is a lot of the parameters about spending the monies changed. So, how they recommended you were able to spend like ELL dollars in the past changed this year and they wanted you to...they wanted to see you spend them in a different way. And then the other thing is everything is based on enrollment. So, we started the years with an allocation that changed and it took

them even a while to let us know what that new allocation was. I think we just got that new number, like, maybe one or two months ago.

So, it's a lot of moving parts, and as Kristin presented, the majority of them aren't even approved yet. So, while we have spent money, we've not started to...we've not been able to reimburse and we haven't spent all of it even because what if one of them should be denied, then we'd be in the negative. So, I'm getting to learn the system and it's been very inconsistent so far.

Lorna: Jamie, it looked like you were trying to make a comment earlier.

Jamie: No.

Lorna: Okay. This is Lorna again, I would just say that I would be okay with the amounts that were suggested being that if it's up to \$25,000, that Miriam and her team would have that discretion to spend those funds. And then if it goes up to \$50,000, then it could be Miriam plus either myself or...sorry, I'll say the position, not the person, either the president or the treasurer, either one, that would have the opportunity to give that secondary approval, and then anything above \$50,000 for the expenditure would be brought to the board.

Colleen: Do we want to...Colleen McCarty, board counsel, you know, based on Dachresha's comments, do we want to include something that indicates, "To the extent possible, the board will consider a wish list or a selection of the consultants as possible?" Do we want to say, you know, something along those lines? Do we want to add that?

Dr. Malich: Tammy Malich, City of Las Vegas, for the record. Would it be allowable to have language that states that Miriam has to send communication to the body of the board, just giving...as an informational item? I don't know if that's allowable but...

Colleen: Colleen McCarty, board counsel. So, as it comes up, or what were you thinking...?

Dr. Malich: Once she knew...like, once a grant comes out or drops that she's going to apply for, that she gives a summary of her intentions to the board just more as an information item, not an action item.

Colleen: Yeah, I mean, we can draft it however we want. What do people think about that?

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. I'm okay with whatever the board decides. I'm just trying to make sure that Miriam is, you know, not...is protected in whatever decision she's making. I'm not trying to tie her hands to make the decisions, it sounds like, because I didn't have time to read this in-depth, I just peruse it. If there's some guidelines already in the procedures that protect her that don't put it all on the executive director where she won't be under any scrutiny, then I'm comfortable.

Colleen: Colleen McCarty, board counsel. So, basically the way it's laid out, and, you know, it's not nearly as concrete as when we're buying goods, right? But the way it's laid out is that Miriam would send an invitation to, you know, various consultants that she's identified requesting a proposal and the proposals would then be reviewed by her grade-level leads and that they would come up with a recommended name, resubmitted back to her, and that's how the discussion would occur. And then, you know, in the amounts over 50,000, it would be brought back to the board for further discussion.

Jamie: Jamie Gonzalez, for the record, so that process you just outlined then, that would then be the vehicle by which Miriam would inform the board that, "Here's the process that we went through, we send invitations out, we got proposals from these three, my team recommended this one, it's above \$50k, here's our recommendation for why we want to go with this one."

Colleen: Right. And, you know, even if it's at the \$25,000 threshold or below, right, then she would be empowered to follow the same process but make the decision. If that makes sense to everybody.

Jamie: Jamie Gonzalez, for the record, the only thing...and I think somewhat related to my experience in working for a government contractor, the one variation that say, "I would have been required to do if I knew that..." We talked about this...we have talked about this earlier that in some cases, there may be very specific types of services that we need where you don't have multiple options to receive bids on, that it's a sole source type of justification. And as part of that whole process that if it's, "This is the only one and here's my rationale," here's the due diligence that we did to see if we had others, we only have this one and this one vendor or what-have-you meets our criteria to provide the service that we need, I think we have that justification built-in on that.

If that's the report that comes back to the board, that sounds fine. And I think that addresses somewhat Dachresha's...her comments about ensuring that Miriam or the executive director is not sort of left out there or vulnerable to anything, that we've got a process, we can demonstrate through, you know, even the minutes of the board meeting, that this process was followed and here's the recommendation and why it was approved, etc.

Colleen: Colleen McCarty, board counsel. So, would that be sort of the consensus is that when she's doing these consultant contracts that tend to be larger amounts of money, that it just shows up as an informational item or a discussion item to just keep everyone informed? Is that what I'm hearing?

Lorna: This is Lorna, I think that's what I'm hearing and that if it is a sole source contractor that she just includes the rationale that, "After research, this was the only contractor or consultant that was available to do the particular job needed," or, you know, something along those lines.

Colleen: And do we want to tie that to a dollar amount or do we want to...for any sort of consultant services?

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. I'm comfortable with just the update, you know, the notification, bringing it to everybody's attention for the 25,000 and above. Just, you know making everybody aware and as was stated, saying like why we selected this vendor and the rationale behind this selection.

Colleen: All right. So, I can rework that and bring this section back to the board for the next meeting.

Jamie: Jamie Gonzalez, for the record. So, one difference or maybe possible change that you mentioned, Colleen, that \$25k to \$50k approval could be...I guess, right now it's the executive director and the president, it could also be the treasurer. So, what did you see as the advantage to include the treasurer as part of that decision-making process?

Colleen: Colleen McCarty, board counsel. You know, generally, I think the more people involved in a decision, sort of the more copper it gives everybody, for lack of a better word, right? More discussions, it just creates more checks and balances. So, we can have it be, you know, anything between 25,000 and 50,000 requires three people to make the decision or we can have it be, as Lorna

suggested, that it's either the executive director and the president or the treasurer, it's whatever you all prefer.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. To your point, Colleen, if three people is more covered, then I say we have the three people.

Colleen: Okay, so then the way I'll draft this, and correct me if I'm misunderstanding, is that anything between that \$25,000 and \$50,000 amount that still doesn't require board approval will require the approval of the executive director, the president, and the treasurer. Okay?

Dr. Moore: As well as. notifying the board.

Colleen: As well as the discussion item for [inaudible 00:52:35]. All right, so then, that was six. Seven is inventory requirements, how we're going to go about keeping track of everything, maintaining the records...

Dr. Moore: I do have a quick question. Dr. Moore for the record. I'm just curious, is there an obligation to go with...when we're not talking about sole source, is there an obligation to go with the lowest bidder or no?

Colleen: Not the way this is written right now.

Dr. Moore: Okay.

Colleen: We can include that if that's the appetite. but that's not....

Dr. Moore: I wasn't recommending it, I just wanted to know.

Colleen: Okay. So, any other questions? Sorry that I'm, like, rushing ahead. Any other questions on item number six, the purchasing and procurement in regard to services? The inventory requirements are pretty standard, how we keep track of things, what do we do if things are lost or stolen? How do we get rid of things? Travel and transportation, how are we going to go about booking and reimbursing travel that's school-related? And then the time and effort policy and procedures relates to when grants or funding people to their work and how that goes back getting calculated. Did anyone have any questions on any of these policies that we didn't talk about? All right, hearing none, so my recommendation would be that we adopt the policies except for Roman Numeral six, which are the purchasing and procurement for services policies, and I will bring those back to the board for the next meeting for a vote. So, if someone wanted to make a motion of that, that'd be good.

Lorna: This is Lorna, I move that we adopt the financial policies and procedures except for Roman numeral number six, which is the policy for purchasing and procurement of services as written.

Jamie: Jamie Gonzalez, for the record, I second that motion.

Lorna: All those in favor?

Together: Aye.

[00:55:24]

[silence]

[00:55:49]

Lorna: All right, thank you, everybody. Now at this time, you have in front of you your Opportunity 180. This was the report of the visit of Opportunity 180 to the school and their overall compliance report. We've had the opportunity to review that and this is an opportunity for any discussion regarding the Great Schools for Nevada Charter School Program Grant Compliance and Performance Monitoring by Opportunity 180. So, were there any comments, questions, or discussions regarding this report?

[00:56:28]

[silence]

[00:56:49]

Miriam: I have a comment. Miriam Benitez, for the record. I just wanted to add, while we were deemed low-risk, we did have a few corrective action items. And they're not a big deal but they will be back to visit us in April, looking to make sure those have been corrected, and some of them have to do with the board. So, I've asked Amanda for help on that. And in some items, for instance, they'd like to see a schedule of board trainings and who's attended what trainings. So, there's a few items on there that are specific to the board that Amanda has been helping me with and I think she's already reached out, I think, to you, Lorna, regarding that but I just wanted to mention that in case you get an email from Amanda. She's been nice enough to help me gather this because it's a lot of just details.

Lorna: Yes. This is Lorna Cervantes. So, one of those questions was, what were the priorities of the board for training for the board? And so, I let Amanda know that our original priorities were to make sure everybody had Open Meeting Law training and board governance training, which I believe everybody has attended at this point. I know Alain was keeping the record of who all had attended or not attended those trainings. The only one...Meli, I'm not sure if you've had the opportunity yet, but as a new member, I think you've been given the information on either the playback or some of that training that's coming up. And if you need help with that, let us know.

Meli: Okay.

Lorna: Also, I did let her know that all of the board members received the information for some of the monthly training that comes out through the Charter Authority. And I know that I attended, for example, the committee training that was sent out and I know some others did as well. So, if there's any of the training that was sent out that you have attended, if you wouldn't mind just emailing Amanda to let her know that you did personally attend that training, I know she would appreciate that. The other thing that I mentioned, at that training, it was presented by a group called One Board, and I've reached out to them for information because one of the things that they suggested is that One Board actually does retreats for boards, like a summer retreat where you would do planning and thinking about what should our priorities be for the next year?

So, I have reached out. I just got a response back this last week and haven't taken it any further than that. But I was hoping that maybe on behalf of the board, you wouldn't mind if I just went ahead and had that discussion to see what they do offer. And maybe that would be something we could do maybe in place of a June meeting or something like that is to hold a board retreat where we could really look at what are our priorities moving forward, create that further timeline, and move forward. So, I gave Amanda that information as well. So, we are working on that.

Miriam: And one more clarification. Miriam Benitez. Alain did send me...he created a nice Excel spreadsheet with everyone's training and I did submit that for this. And so, I don't think that's what they were looking for because that's what the corrective action was and they said they want more of like a schedule, what upcoming trainings, what are you requiring. And then when Amanda helped me look in the original application, I think she found that in the original

application, it said that all board members would do, like, 12 hours of training. So, I think that's what they're looking for, like, "What's your schedule? What do you have planned for those 12 hours?" And of course, everyone's already completed the Open Meeting and the governance one, and I can't remember how long those were, but then kind of coordinating and organizing the remaining hours and what we're expecting our team to attend.

Lorna: Okay, so what we might want to do is see if there is a member who wouldn't mind, you know, looking into what trainings are coming up and maybe bringing back a recommendation to the greater board on what we should attend or should not attend, and maybe working with Amanda on helping to create that timeline.

Heather: Heather Nay, for the record. I do get emails from the National Charter Board a lot, like upcoming ones. The problem is, and I've signed up for a few of them, not realizing that it's Eastern time so it conflicts with my work schedule. So, it says like 3:00 or 4:00 Eastern Time and I didn't realize it when I signed up when it's really 1:00 time and I'm working. So, I don't know if there's, like, a way that, like, we can watch the training even if it's not live. Like, is there a way we can do it afterwards?

Lorna: I think one thing that I've noticed is that if someone attends, they will send the deck for it and a playback.

Heather: Like if that's an option, like, I would be, you know, willing to do more trainings but it's literally in the middle of a workday, so it's kind of hard to attend.

Lorna: Yep. The other thing that I did include in our prioritization is that we had Miriam present training to the board on the dual language education model and how to analyze the academic data that was brought to the board. So, I made sure that we include that training as well. But you're right, Heather, that is a concern because I've noticed the same thing. I thought it was at 3:00 and it's like, "Oh, it's starting in 10 minutes."

Heather: And it's like, "Wait, what? I'm about to go back for lunch." But yeah, so that's one thing that I have noticed, so if there's any way, like, we can make it up afterwards, you know, watch it on our own time, if we can look into that, I would be willing to do it.

Amanda: Amanda Kuhl, City of Las Vegas, for the record. They do record them and typically, I try to send out the recording afterwards. So, I can give you guys maybe a heads up via text or something if they're coming if that's more helpful, but they definitely do record the trainings. So, you can do this on your own time.

Heather: Okay. That works for me.

Lorna: All right, So Amanda, maybe if you wouldn't mind just helping us out with what trainings have been offered and then we could let you know the ones that everybody has attended and try to create...go backward and create that timeline from there. And then at our summer retreat, we can prioritize that moving forward.

Jamie: Jamie Gonzalez, for the record. It sounds like...to meet the issue at hand, it sounds like what we need is from...I'll pick a date, from April through the end of the calendar year, here are the trainings that the board will be participating in.

Miriam: Yeah, I think so.

Lorna: That's what they're asking for.

Jamie: Yeah, okay. So, is that something that Amanda would be doing? Is that something that...you were saying maybe one of the board members comes back to the board with a proposal?

Lorna: That's what I was hoping is maybe we could get a board member who'd come back to the rest of us with a proposal on how we could satisfy that requirement.

Jamie: And is there one vendor that we...that if a board member were to do that, is there one vendor that you would go to to look at their library of upcoming trainings that they could use as a resource so that they're hunting all over the place?

Lorna: I know that One Board...and I could forward the contact information to whoever wants to do this, they do provide training. And Opportunity 1800 stated at the end of the one meeting that they actually can pay for the training for boards that want to be a part of some of this training.

Meli: Meli Pulido, if no one else wants to volunteer, I'm happy to take that on and work with Amanda and maybe establish...it sounds like it's 12 hours that we

need to complete, maybe identified the required compliance and then some growth and development training and some elective training. So, I will work with Amanda on that. What deadline would you like to identify for this?

Lorna: Do you think you can do it by our April meeting, April 6th? Like, one month, would that be enough time? And that has to be done by April 1st, actually, right?

Amanda: Yeah. Amanda Kuhl, for the record. It depends on when, [inaudible 01:05:53], it depends on when the revaluation is.

Miriam: So, Miriam Benitez, for the record. We know that they're revisiting us in April but we don't have a set date yet in April.

Lorna: Well, then I think the worst case scenario is, this is Lorna, that we could say, "This is our draft and it's being adopted at our April 6th meeting," if they come back before then. And keep in mind too as you're creating that, if you don't mind, to think about it was 12 hours including training that has already occurred. So, keep that in mind, so maybe we only need nine more hours or eight more hours of training. And also that in June, we were...it looked like I saw a lot of shaking hands that said, "Yes, let's do a board retreat to kind of look at our priorities for next year." So, we could think about that as being a few hours, where we would plan to get together and work for a few hours to create our maybe committees and priorities for next year.

And Meli, I will send you that contact information when I get home tonight, if you don't mind reaching out to them. Was there anything else with the Opportunity 180 discussion that anyone else came to mind or that anyone else would bring forward? All right, thank you. Next is the discussion for possible action regarding salary increases and benefits for Strong Start Academy staff. I think we all saw in the budget proposals for next year that maybe a possibility of a 5% increase in salaries for all staff members, meaning support staff, teachers, and administrators at the school.

Does that sound reasonable? Do we need to at this time make a decision on this? Would the board feel more comfortable having a couple of people take a look at it and bringing back a recommendation at our next meeting to either approve or not approve that 5%? I can say that as we were recruiting teachers to come to the school last year, there were a couple of things that we had to look at. One is that the vision for the school from the city's standpoint was that teachers would

be paid more than teachers who work for the school district, and also the idea that teachers would have an opportunity for a salary increase at the end of the year for cost of living at minimum. So, I will just say that. So, I would like to just open that item up to the floor for discussion.

Miriam: I'd like to also add, Miriam Benitez, for the record, that all of our teachers that are with us from CCSD, they are on a leave of absence. And in order to extend that leave of absence, they have to submit an intent letter from the school and the deadline for that is April 1st. So many of the teachers have been asking for that intent letter so that they could submit because if they don't submit by April 1st, then they lose their leave, and so they're terminated from the district. So, a lot of the teachers are waiting on that intent and of course, part of that intent does have the salary.

Lorna: So, we need a decision tonight.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. I personally am in support of an increase. I mean, we all are living in this world of inflation, so I understand that it is necessary to make sure that our teachers and our staff have competitive wages. My only question or ask, I will say, is that for a future ask of salary increases, a presentation like maybe just an overall recap for the year to support the decision will be desired.

Lorna: Okay. Others?

Heather: Heather Nay, for the record. As a parent, you guys already know I have nothing bad to say about the school. But as far as the incident that happened with teachers leaving and other teachers and coaches stepping up, like, the teachers, they're just magnificent. So, even on a personal level of being a parent, I love my teachers and they deserve the world and I know that the world is a little bit more expensive now, so give them what they need. But that's just my opinion personally.

Lorna: Okay. Thank you, Heather. Others?

Dr. Malich: Tammy Malich, City of Las Vegas, for the record. I know I don't get the vote on this. I would just say to Dachresha's point, the interim assessment data from the students, which is a result of teacher instruction, they're doing incredible. So, I completely agree with her it's what warrants this. After seeing last week, we had a special city council meeting where we had the State

superintendent of public instruction, the state funding formula...the head of the Funding Formula Commission, and the chief officer at Applied Analysis report on City of Las Vegas schools and student data demographic broken out by the City of Las Vegas, and we're doing better than the rest of the district. It was horrific and very sad, but to see the growth that these babies are making is what has been incredible. So, not only does Heather think they're wonderful people as a mom, their data supports that they are wonderful people doing great things with kids. As a former teacher and a former principal, they are definitely earning their wages.

Lorna: Thank you, Tammy. Any other board members like to weigh in on this discussion? Go ahead, Nicole.

Nicole: You know what? Of course, I wanted to wait and hear the opinions of others. But as a teacher myself, I'm an educator, I think it is feasible to offer that 5% cost of living raise. If you want to retain high-quality teachers, you need to pay them, you know? At least, like you said, the inflation is going up and we don't want starving teachers.

Lorna: Thank you, Nicole. Alee, Alain, Jamie.

Jamie: Jamie Gonzalez, for the record. So, I went back to Kristin's presentation, which introduced the notion of the 5%...

[01:13:18]

[silence]

[01:13:36]

Dr. Bengochea: Is it frozen for you all as well? Yeah. Okay.

Dr. Moore: Yeah, we lost them. They might be coming back.

[01:13:43]

[silence]

[01:14:33]

Lorna: Okay, here, you got it. Did you all hear Jamie's comment, everybody, and the answer? Okay, so Jamie was asking how...this is Lorna, how we arrived at the 5%. Miriam explained that she and Kristin Googled what is the amount

that's being used across the different schools and across the country for cost of living, it came out to 8% approximately. We saw that there's a 3% increase in the amount needed for PERS for next year, so that's how they arrived at the 5% that was budgeted for in the original allocations that were brought to us in Kristin's report today. So, just recapping that answer. Meli or Alain or Alee, if any of you have any discussions or thoughts on this subject?

Meli: Meli Pulido, I am in full support of the cost of living increase, for sure.

Lorna: Thank you.

Dr. Moore: Dr. Moore, for the record. I echo everyone.

Lorna: Okay.

Jamie: Jamie Gonzalez, for the record, just a question for clarification. Is this a cost of living increase or is it simply a general salary increase? How is it categorized? Because cost of living increase to me suggests...again, it suggested something contractual or something of that nature as opposed to where it towards merit...as opposed to whether it's a merit-based or just a general annual increase.

Lorna: This is Lorna, I think I was thinking of it as just a general annual increase in salary not based on specific merit of teachers like how they're doing academically, although we see the academic support or we see the growth of students, you know, to back up that decision. But I was thinking it was just an annual either, you know, thinking about cost of living or other things as making that decision.

Jamie: And as such...Jamie Gonzalez for the record, as such, it would be applied equitably to each regardless of merit or what-have-you that it would be a standard 5% increase for all?

Lorna: Yes, and including support staff and administration and teachers. Yes, all groups, all classes of employees. All right, any other discussion?

Meli: Meli Pulido, so then that brings up another question then. If this is a 5% increase based on merit, will they be eligible for cost-of-living increase? Or will they be...?

Lorna: I don't think it was...this is Lorna, I don't think it was based on merit. I think it was just a salary...like an annual salary increase. Yes.

Colleen: Collen McCarty, board counsel. None of the teachers have what you would call a contract. It's sort of an agreement about sort of what the expectations are. There's not a contract per se, so there's nothing contractually that requires us to do an annual cost of living or anything like that.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. Madam Chair, thanks for that reminder of the PERS increase. So, basically, they're getting a 2% increase because 3% of it is gonna go to their PERS increase.

Lorna: This is Lorna. No, it would be 3% increase paid toward their PERS plus 5% on their salary.

Dachresha: So, we're covering their PERS increase.

Lorna: Correct.

Dachresha: Thank you for that clarification.

Lorna: This is Lorna, thank you for the question, Dachresha. I'm glad we made that clear that it was paying for both. So, it's really 8% total increase in what the teachers are getting but it's covering that PERS...that increase to their PERS. Any other discussion? Seeing none, I'd be happy to hear a motion at this time then regarding the salary increases.

Dachresha: Dachresha Harris, for the record. I motion that we approve for the teachers and the staff at Strong Start to receive the 5% increase for the school year.

Nicole: Nicole Thompson, I second that motion.

Lorna: This is Lorna. Dachresha, I'm gonna ask if you would be willing to amend your motion just slightly to say the 5% salary increase plus the 3% paid toward their PERS, so a total of 8%.

Dachresha: Okay. I motion to approve a 5% salary increase, 3% increase towards their PERRS, for a total of 8% for the school year '23-'24.

Lorna: Thank you, Dachresha. And I heard a second from Nicole, is that an acceptable change to you, Nicole?

Nicole: Yes, ma'am, I second that motion.

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

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Together: Aye.

Lorna: Any opposed? Okay, thank you. That was unanimously approved, thank you. Sorry, I was moving a little too fast for the time lapse in the recording. Sorry about that, guys. All right, number 10 is a report by the executive director regarding MAP student achievement growth. This is for our winter MAP data that you see in front of you. So, the last time, we brought back the first round of increases on our iReady scores. This is a different but kind of a parallel assessment that is given to students also in the wintertime and also showing great increases for students. Miriam, what would you add to that?

Miriam: Miriam Benitez, for the record. So, we wrapped up our MAP testing on February 16th and the MAP testing is required throughout the state for all students in...I think it's K-8, is it, Lorna? K-8. So, as you can see, side by side, the MAP...I really like this data because it only shows the students that have been enrolled in the school from the beginning from the fall to winter. So, it has data, it can show their growth. So, as you can see for the MAP in kindergarten, we had a huge increase. When we look at the median percentile, it moved from 60th to 77th. In first grade, the median percentile moved from 47th to 77th as well and we see a big increase in our green and blue, which green means proficient and blue means advanced. So, these are kids that are performing slightly above grade level.

And then from Grade 2, that's where we didn't see as greatest results as we would have liked. The median percentile was 61st in the fall and then it slipped down to 56th percentile, although we saw a decrease in our students that were in red, so the ones that are more than one grade level below, and we saw a huge increase in our yellows, so those are the ones that are getting closer to proficiency. But we did see some students slip from the blue and the green. And so, we have looked at that, and we don't know if it was a bad test date because our kids that slipped were like one or two points away from being proficient.

But this also happened to be during the time when we lost our kindergarten teachers, that then we had to merge our second-grade class and then they went from being a classroom of 8 and 9 to all of a sudden a classroom of 17. And then half of those students had a teacher change, so we know teacher change is always difficult in the middle of the year and they happen to be during this math winter testing right when all of that unfortunately happened. For the reading winter MAP data, we saw a huge increase across the board. And this is what I

would expect because being our first year, obviously, we have to do training in reading and math because everything was new to us, but our focus has been reading.

So, we do see, again, in kindergarten, that median percentile increased from the 54th percentile to the 72nd, in first grade from the 52nd to the 70th, and again, in second grade from the 41st to the 70th percentile, and we see a huge decline in that red and increases in the green and blue. So, we have worked really, really hard at identifying our students that are struggling and we've been offering them tutoring and we offer them all kinds of small-group instruction. I just submitted another grant that is in the process of going back and forth for approval for a summer program that we want to offer our special ed students and our students that are still in the red and orange. I can't offer it to everybody because, otherwise, it wouldn't be as effective and I don't have...I have lots of teachers that are very close to that burnout, so not really willing to teach for the summer program. But our goal is still to try to get all, if not as close to all to that green and blue, proficient or above.

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

Dr. Bengochea: Alain Bengochea, for the record. As you know, I will say something at this point. I just kind of...I'm sitting on CCSD's bilingual Advisory Committee similar to this group and they presented us with the MAP data in Spanish. So, again, I kind of want to emphasize that I would love to see MAP Spanish data at a future time just to see the side-by-side and seeing what improvements are being made across languages.

Miriam: Alain, you got MAP data in Spanish?

Dr. Bengochea: Yeah, they're administering the MAP in Spanish as well.

Lorna: To all students?

Miriam: They're allowing them to administer both? Because we asked and they told us we had to select one or the other, that we couldn't give it in both.

Dr. Bengochea: I think they're giving it in both because I was presented with...

Lorna: For all students, Alain?

Dr. Bengochea: I may look at the date, I have it here. Well, they did...I saw a grade...I saw it in grade kindergarten and sixth, seventh, and eighth is what they

showed me because you know what they're doing, they have bilingual programs at Reno and Monaco Middle School.

Miriam: And you saw data in both English and Spanish?

Dr. Bengochea: They showed it to me in Spanish, only in Spanish. But I could ask that question to find out whether they're administering it in both.

Miriam: Okay, because we were told, as a charter school, we're kind of our own district, so we deal directly with the MAP people. And when we asked that, they said we have to select one or the other, that we couldn't administer that in both languages.

Dr. Bengochea: And why is that? Because it would invalidate the results?

Miriam: That's what they said because, like, for a student that's bilingual, he'd see the same test basically twice, once in English and once in Spanish. So, that would invalidate it. That was our understanding.

Dr. Bengochea: Okay. I'm gonna verify that. I'll verify that and I'll get back to you on it.

Miriam: Okay.

Heather: Heather Nay for the record. As a parent comment, my son, personally, he went into kindergarten, he knew how to spell his name but he didn't know how to read. Now, he's reading at a low third-grade level. And in Spanish, I've been going to the library and getting books in Spanish and he's like, "Will you read it to me?" So, of course, I read it to him and he's like, "That's not how you say that, this is how you say it," and I'm like, "Okay, Julian." And in math also, he's in the 90th percentile. He knew nothing about math going into kindergarten, I can guarantee you that.

He knew how to count but he didn't know anything about math, and now the teacher told me that she's gonna challenge him to do three-digit addition and subtraction. That's how much he's learning because he's not learning it at home because I can't even count to 10 in dollars. This is why I am the parent representative on this board. But yeah, so just as a parent...and I know he's not the only one, I was told by the teacher that there's a few students in the class who have just gravitated towards learning and are way above where they should be. So, that's just a comment.

Lorna: This is Lorna, and that shows by the number of students in the blue because blue means above grade level. So, that's proved right here in the data.

Heather: He's just beyond grade level, it's not just one. He's up at the third grade. He's probably [crosstalk 01:29:07].

Lorna: Wonderful. Good. Dr. Bengochea?

Dr. Bengochea: Hi, Alain again. Yeah, so I'm confirming, yes, they are administering in both languages in kindergarten, yeah, in reading, kindergarten all the way through eighth grade, actually. So, they administer it in English and Spanish in the fall, they administer it in English in the winter, and then they administer it in English and Spanish in the spring.

Miriam: Okay. So, I will reach back out to our contact and now I can say, "Well, I know there's another school in the district that's doing it," and see what I get back because that was our initial ask when we were told no.

Dr. Bengochea: Yeah. Because I think it'll just show a better picture of what students are accomplishing at the school.

Miriam: Yeah.

Lorna: This is Lorna. Thank you for that, Dr. Bengochea. Any other discussion? All right. Well, thank you so much and please congratulate the students and teachers on their growth and we'll expect to see more of the same moving forward. All right, thank you so much. Now ready for item number 11, this is a report by the City of Las Vegas with an update regarding ongoing construction projects at Strong Start Academy. So, I'm not sure who's taking this item.

Dr. Malich: Hi, Dr. Tammy Malich, City of Las Vegas, for the record. Currently, we have four construction projects in progress at Strong Start Academy Elementary School at various phases consisting of a couple of different things including classroom expansion on the second floor of the main building, flooring installation on the second building in the cafeteria area, concrete slab replacement in the second building, and expansion of the building exterior in or around the current location of the pastor's house. The second-floor classroom expansion involves moving the two...currently, there are two classrooms on each side, it's a mirror. Mirror across the hall and mirror back and forth.

They'll take out the center...well, first, they'll add two walls in the room, and then they'll remove the center wall turning the current two classrooms into three on each side. The square footage allowed them to do so and still get health district approval to meet the square footage requirements for the classes. That will allow the school to have three of one grade level on each side versus two currently. That expansion or that project is in final design phase. We saw the preliminary this week. The final is supposed to be back in the next week or two. The plan for expansion would be to begin the work the first week of June and be completed by July 31st for the start of the '23-'24 school year.

That will be a private contractor and designer outside of the city that is also doing the Las Vegas High School build-out. And that is helpful because the school is not a historic site on the registry, but it sits in the historic districts. And then the work will be done by city construction crew in-house and it won't have to go to city council because of the size. Amanda is following up with the requirements of us notifying and getting approval from the Charter Authority because SPCSA has to be notified of any construction projects. The flooring installation in the special rooms will take place in mid-March. The contractor is currently waiting for the flooring to arrive. The plan was to remove flooring...carpeted areas and put in PVC, is that what those are called? I think I made that up.

Woman: LVT

Dr. Malich: Some letters, some alphabet letters, that is like commercial grade vinyl but looks nice. So, that project will be coming this year. And then the concrete slab replacement in the second building where the cafeteria is, a little bit more extensive. As you all probably know, they ripped out the flooring pretty early on at the start of the school year. They've been doing investigation work around what the problem is. They've come to a conclusion of the problem and now it's just fixing the problem. That work will continue the second week of July and conclude around October of 2023, so shortly into the new school year.

The current teachers' lounge will be temporarily used as a kitchen during that time and then the students will continue to eat lunch in their classroom and specialists will push in until this is completed shortly after the new school year. Then the last construction project, I did a CIP request, Capital Improvement request from the city, I don't have the final answer on the capital improvement

funding. It's a pretty large ask, it is a request for \$3.6 million. That's the going square footage rate right now that would include leveling the current caretaker's house or pastor's house, and then after the demo, replacing that kind of equipment with a two-story building that will contain an estimated additional nine classrooms.

Design has not begun officially on that project. It looks like the project will take two years. We have impressed upon everybody involved that we need those classrooms completed so that we have those for the '24-'25 school year to accommodate fourth and fifth grade, and that will be the final build-out. So, we will update you at future board meetings on the progress because as you know, construction is not always...yeah, it's very fluid. I was gonna say [inaudible 01:36:05]. But fluid, I like that better. So, at least there's a plan to get the school through one more year, and then the final build-out altogether. Questions?

Lorna: Questions by any board members for Dr. Malich or the city?

Dr. Malich: For clarity, those projects are being funded by the city, so there's no fiscal impact to the school or the board.

Lorna: Thank you for that, Dr. Malich. We appreciate all the support that we have received from the city with regard to the facilities work and continuing to keep us apprised of where we are in this in this process. So, we really appreciate that, thank you. All right, seeing no other questions or comments, I'd like to table item number 12 for our next meeting. Amanda did reach out and we were not ready yet with a report on the security report, so we will table that for our next meeting. And that brings us to item number 13. This is citizen participation public comment on non-agenda items. So, no action can be taken on this item at this time.

One thing I would like you all to think about, this will be on our agenda in April, will be election of officers for the '23-'24 school year of the board. So, anyone wanting to nominate somebody or put themselves forward for the president, the treasurer, or the secretary position, we'll take those nominations at the April meeting. If anyone wants to reach out to any of the existing officers at this time, so Dr. Bengochea, myself, or Jamie, and ask if the person's willing to remain in their position, that's also acceptable. So, I just want to give you a heads up that that will be coming at our April meeting as required by our bylaws. All right, seeing no other public comment at this time, we will adjourn our meeting.

Dr. Malich: Wait.

Lorna: Oh, sorry. I missed one. Sorry. Dr. Malich.

Dr. Malich: Tammy Malich, City of Las Vegas, for the record. You all should be or will be soon receiving correspondence from the city clerk from the City of Las Vegas regarding an ordinance change from the city that now basically codifies that any appointees by city council members or the mayor to special boards, committees, or commissions will end immediately upon election of a new elective in that seats to allow for the new elected to appoint a new member if they so desire or reappoint the current. And so, regardless of the term within the bylaws, for example, if your term doesn't end until 2025 and the mayor happens to be up for reelection and didn't win, let's say a new mayor came in and you're the mayor's appointee, you would be notified that your term had ended and then the new mayor would be able to appoint new members.

The clerk is sending that out, though, centrally, it has come up on some other boards and commissions that all of you are appointed...no, not all of you, let me take that back. Some of you are appointed by elected, some of you are not, so that only impacts part of this board. Nicole, for example, is my appointee, so that would be included in this ordinance. Lorna is Lisa Morris Hibbler's appointee, that would not be included in this ordinance. Meli, no, she is Jorge's. Our city manager, Jorge, appointed...

Lorna: I think Jamie, right?

Dr. Malich: Jamie, so that would not apply to you. The rest of you were appointed by either the mayor or Wards 1, 3, or 5, that would only apply to you. So, some of you will get the notice from Stacey in our clerk's office, some of you will not. So, I just wanted to make you aware, you're gonna think something crazy was going on, many of our seats are up for reelection in the next year, so I'm not giving you a warning that this may be your next to last board meeting either. Sorry.

Lorna: Thank you for that information, Tammy. We appreciate it. All right, barring any other public comment at this time, and I don't see any, we'll adjourn the meeting at this time. Thank you all for your attention tonight. Our meeting was a little longer than some others, we appreciate your attention and participation throughout the meeting. Have a good night, everyone.