

Croton-Harmon UFSD | October 8, 2020 Board of Education Meeting CHUFSD

Good evening, everyone. I would like to welcome you all to the October business meeting of the Croton Harmon Board of Education. The board will be moving into executive session at the beginning of the meeting, and we expect that we will be back at about 8 PM. So recommended action that the Board of Education enters into executive session to discuss a student's record, which must remain confidential pursuant to FERPA.

So moved.

[INAUDIBLE], yeah, call to order.

Oh, OK, [INAUDIBLE].

Oh, I'm sorry.

Dr. [INAUDIBLE]?

Yes?

I second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Opposed? Abstain? Motion carries. Thank you very much. We will be back on camera. We're set to be back around 8:00 PM. Thank you. Thank you, everyone. The recommended action that the board of education exit the executive session and reconvenes the scheduled business meeting.

So moved.

Second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Opposed? Abstain? Motion carries. All right, so now we will say the Pledge of Allegiance together.

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

Thank you. And again, we do have members joining us remotely as well as here in the community room. I will ask that we do a roll call. So I'm Sarah Carrier, board president. And now [INAUDIBLE].

[INAUDIBLE]. Neal Haber, board member.

Joshua Diamond, board member.

Iris Bugliosi, trustee.

Denise Cohen, assistant superintendent for business.

John Griffiths, assistant superintendent.

Deborah O'Connell, superintendent.

Can we have some of our remote people who are doing this remotely?

Yeah, hi. Brian Loges, vice president.

Beth McFadden, board member.

Andrea Furey, board member.

Thank you, everyone. Great. Now we will move on to the approval of the agenda. Recommended action that the board of education approves the agenda as presented.

So moved.

Second.

All in question?

Give me maybe one second. OK.

All in favor?

Aye.

Opposed? Abstain? Motion carries. We will now move into reports. And first up, we will have Dustin Wood out of [INAUDIBLE] present the audit report.

Well, thank you all for having me tonight. I also do quickly want to thank Denise, and Dr. O'Connell and their staff, specifically Tracy and Dina, who was at the district in the beginning of the summer as the treasurer who left a good trail behind. Barry, the new treasurer, who stepped in fantastically and was a pleasure to work with. Susan Camilliere, Susan Cerrato, Marissa, Jackie, Michelle, everybody in the business obviously was a pleasure to deal with: very professional, provided me with the information as soon as I requested it, really just a great experience all around.

So within this financial statement, which I believe everybody will have in front of them-- so we have a report on the financial statements themselves, which are on pages 1-3. The district was given an unmodified opinion, which is otherwise known as a clean opinion. It's our highest level of assurance that the financial statements were free of material misstatement and obvious error.

Also within here is a report on the extra classroom funds, also given a clean opinion. As well as the internal control report on compliance, which means that the district was in compliance with federal and state grants, and local, federal, and state law. Also, and just overall, that the district is in good financial status with well-funded reserves and they also stayed within the 4% for unassigned fund balance, which is New York state law.

And I think it is worth pointing out that the appropriated fund balance, or otherwise known as the giveback-- the amount that reduces the tax levy for the following year-- was increased for the 2021 budget by \$540,000, which is a 40% increase in the giveback. So that's not really keeping the residents of the district in mind with that.

Also, I do want to point out that the district has a very healthy capital reserve. It gives the district the ability to avoid financing, which in turn saves the district residents hundreds of thousands if not millions in interest payments over the course of the bond. So really, it's been great management here at the district over many years, including the last few years and current year. And the district's really in great financial shape.

If there's any questions, please feel free to ask them at this time, or you could always follow up with me with email or through Denise at any point.

Does anyone have any questions for Mr. Wood?

I just have a quick question. Did audit choose to meet with-- what?

Can you speak into the mic, Lauren?

Oh, sorry. I was just asking did audit have a chance to meet with the internal order reform?

Yes.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Did you have a chance--

We met the evening before this meeting to review this [INAUDIBLE]. We had one meeting about a month ago where we did a preliminary to hear the address.

Oh, OK. Was there anything you had in that you might add for the rest of us?

There's nothing. I don't think that there is anything that is unusual. I think there's some areas that we're going to need to pay some attention to. Simply because we are in some trying times. The timing between, for instance, the timing of the start of our school lunch program and the COVID pandemic have worked together to create a situation that requires some careful attention. It's not a problem, but it is something that we just need to pay attention to going forward.

But obviously it's not something that's going to be a problem for us, I don't think. Yet we just need to pay attention to it and prepare for it.

Justin, can you speak to that for a moment? And with regard to your other districts and the school lunch fund deficits.

So I audit six districts throughout the summer: all six of those districts had a deficit for the year in the school lunch fund. Four of those six resulted in an overall fund balance deficit, all related to the COVID basically, but I believe Croton did. And most other districts, they continued to pay their employees, continued many of the expenses, continued providing meals for those that needed them, and asked to be provided.

And it was costly without bringing in the revenue to match. And as Joshua said, the school lunch fund being in its infancy as a full school lunch fund at Croton. The timing of this wasn't the best, resulting in a deficit for the school lunch fund. But we talked extensively in the audit committee about how it can be handled over the next so many years. It seems that the audit committee, Denise, superintendent,

we're going to have a good plan in place to be able to pull it out of a deficit and avoiding the deficit in the future.

Thank you, Justin. Any other questions?

I guess in past years, Justin, you or your predecessors have pointed out highlight in the financial reports. I don't know if that is needed for any board member, unless there's something that you particularly want to draw our attention to which [INAUDIBLE] a strength in the district, or an area of concern. That's one thing. The other is is there anything in terms of the management letter that I'm looking at now that you need to pay attention to, other than-- I guess there are two things I should mention on page three. I have it on [INAUDIBLE].

Yes, those are just kind of relatively minor. One is the school lunch program as already discussed, and the other has to do with ensuring that class trips, which we're not having at the moment, are paid for in an appropriate manner through the district's credit card rather than staff members. Anything else that you want to draw our attention to?

So really for me, the main financial highlights were the fact that the district was-- did keep the unassigned fund balance at 4%, where other districts have ignored that law this year, considering the COVID. But after discussions with the audit committee, the superintendent, and Denise, they decided to stick with the 4%, which I think is the prudent thing to do. And in that process, also, as I said before, the increase in the give back or the increase in the appropriated fund balance to me is that the highlight that I really want to drill home here. Because despite everything else that's going on, the ability to give some relief to the taxpayers is, to me, an excellent thing.

Most places either drop that number or stay consistent with the prior year, but the district's been able to-- and really that's helping out the residents. Who knows what tough times people in the community are going through and any help the district can give to them I think is great. And also the fact that the reserves are well funded-- as I said, the capital reserve being very well funding and avoiding interest payments in future years amounting to hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars.

As far as the management letter goes, we talked about that stuff in detail during the audit committee meeting, but, Mike, you kind of hit the nail on the head, where you said there's this school lunch deficit one, which is something we're required to put in. But also the minor finding there with the extra classroom with a credit card, which me, Joshua, Denise, and Brian, and Beth, and Barry, and Dr. O'Connell all discussed in the audit committee, and did some brainstorming session on how the best way to handle that is going forward.

Thank you, Justin. I would also just like to again point out and highlight our healthy reserves in this environment-- that our ability to retain that and also increase our give back considerably to the taxpayer is quite a feat.

So I had one more question, which is this just so we know for future years-- in terms of our co-pay-- I'm looking for it here. How we are doing in terms of meeting the [INAUDIBLE] requirement for [INAUDIBLE]--

So page 16, sir if you want to--

Yes, 16. Thank you.

Down towards the bottom, the 44 669.

So it's funny you bring it up, because it's actually something that we discussed during the audit committee as well. So the old OPEB liability two years ago, Governmental Accounting Standards Board, which is a federal organization that comes up with new accounting standards for governmental entities on an annual basis, came up with as we stated number 75 which brings the full OPEB liability onto the government-wide balance sheet, which is a very big number. You'll see \$45 million. Now what that number represents is future payments to be made for other post employment benefits. So in this case, retiree health insurance for those that it is available to.

Now that liability cannot be funded by the district. What can be funded by the district are the retiree health insurance payments on an annual basis, which is built into your medical insurance budget on an annual basis. As we all know, those costs are astronomical and are growing fast, and hard to predict what COVID related effect will be on the health insurance going forward. I imagine not a good effect, meaning that that will go up. But each year we receive an updated report from an actuary

[AUDIO OUT]

Date of birth, what's available to each employee-- and they come back with a liability. We review those inputs that they receive to ensure that they're accurate. Actually with Joanie, which I should thank her also. I failed to mention her in my list of names before. No disrespect to her in any way-- I'm glad that I had a chance to.

But yeah-- so it's a big ugly number, but it's going to be funded over the next 30 years versus it's not anything that the district's even-- the district doesn't even have the ability to legally fund that. They

can only fund the next 12 months in the upcoming budget.

OK. Thank you. I just want to make sure that [INAUDIBLE] and the public community review and understand that that doesn't mean that we actually have a current liability of \$44 million we're going to have to worry about paying out, but also where it comes from and why that may change over the years. And as you say probably increase over the years.

Absolutely. And the other fear there is oh, if our bonding company sees this, then they're not going to like it. It might affect our interest rates on bonds. But they do take into account that it's a nationwide thing-- it's not just Croton-Harmon Union Free School District that's dealing with this liability. It's across the board.

So I have one more question, which was about something you said before. You had complimented our district for staying within the 4% unrestricted reserves. And you said other districts had not given that [INAUDIBLE]. Have you found that other districts have in essence gone over 4%, and therefore are not in compliance with the law, and that's what those districts have done?

Yes.

That's basically what it is. OK.

Yes.

Any question for right now?

Thank you.

Thank you very much.

Have a great evening.

Thank you. You as well. Thank you for coming in and--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

--with us.

Have a good night.

Yes, you, too. Thank you.

And with that, we will move into are my president's report. Thank you, everyone, for joining us tonight. Thank you to the people who are joining us on live stream. I wanted to use my president's report tonight to note a couple of items on the calendar. First, the Harry Chapin Memorial Run Against Hunger is celebrating its 40th anniversary. For safety and social distancing reasons this year, they will not be gathering at the Croton-Harmon High School as they usually do. Instead, you will get to choose when and where you would like to run or walk-- any time between October 10 and October 18, 2020. And that can be in Croton or anywhere else. So you can go to their website and sign up.

The other thing that I would like to highlight that's upcoming on the calendar is on Wednesday, October 28, we will be hosting a Community Conversation on Equity and Inclusion in partnership with the NYU Metro Center. Dr. Natalie Zwerger of the NYU Metro Center has helped plan for the event, and will facilitate the discussion. This event is one component of a multi-year district initiative to advance work on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and I hope that many members of our community will be able to join us that evening.

Lastly, I also wanted to note that we have recently heard from Croton 100 as well as other individual members of the community, urging the Croton-Harmon district to purchase an electric bus. Advocates have cited the benefits of lower emissions, the urgency of climate change, and the need to put our ideals into practice. Please note that we recognize the importance of our role in this area and value community input on these important decisions. We understand that converting our bus fleet would play a critical role in reducing the district's carbon footprint, and it is a goal we are striving to achieve, while also considering the many other factors involved, including long-term financial planning and the impact on our tax payers.

While the district has and will continue to make this transition a focus, we also have current transportation needs, which have only grown with COVID-19 considerations. Throughout the 2020 and 2021 budget planning vote process, we did consistently communicate our need to replace an aging 66 passenger diesel bus, along with other smaller transportation vehicles. During that process, we proposed the purchase of a 65 passenger gas bus in order to meet our responsibility to safely transport the students residing in our district, which involves over 32 different schools covering more than 400,000 miles each year.

When evaluating the possibility of an electric bus purchase this year, it was evident that even with potential grant sources, there would be an increased cost to the community over and above the amount voted on in the transportation fund opposition. It is important to note also that the timing did not work in our favor, given our need to have a bus be at capacity in September.

We are actively pursuing the electrification of our bus fleet, consulting with various industry professionals in the other districts, and convening a bus electrification task-force to analyze the district's current and future needs, opportunities, and challenges. I would encourage any community members who have an interest in serving on that task-force to please let us know. You can reach out to the board at our BOE@chufsd email address, and we can forward you the form to fill out for an indication of interest. And that it is my president report for the evening.

It's on your report. Thank you very much. Will there be material shared with the community in advance of the October 28 [INAUDIBLE] conversation. Will we be able to-- community members be able to review and help form the discussion, or help facilitate the discussion?

Absolutely. I do believe that we will have more materials forthcoming. I would defer that to the communications chair.

So we've been working on this diligently. Natalie is going to provide us with some preparatory material, but we don't expect there to be a lot of it. At most it's going to be to essentially instruct the public on the-- I'm going to say non-agenda. And the reason I say non-agenda is because it is a more free form event outside of where we have some place specific that we are going, but rather a chance to hear from the community-- to hear people's experiences and let them have an opportunity to share them.

So there's going to be some material that's going to come out that will sort of describe what the evening is going to look like, and set up the procedures that will take place at the meeting-- at the town hall. But it's not going to be a large [INAUDIBLE] case. It's going to be pretty short, so that it could fit easily into a K12-- let's put it that way.

And just by way of a quick update, I was in touch with Jackie Burton today, who did inform me that the public should be seeing things hitting social media this weekend with some of that information that you're referring to.

Thank you. One thing, and [INAUDIBLE]. And this might be a quorum issue, but probably enough now. [INAUDIBLE] that I've spoken to some students who have said that they don't get K12 alerts, because they're not clued into the parent K12 system. You get high schools, and I spoke with middle school students-- didn't get a thing. I wouldn't suggest it's very important for our student population that we send all of those messages-- [INAUDIBLE] call alerts or similar-- to the student body at both the high school and middle school, so they are able to know events, join us-- participate.

Thank you very much.

So that concludes my president's report, and this would normally be going to hearing the public. I did not receive any letters to be read for hearing the public this evening, and we don't want anyone joining us, so we will move on now to the superintendent's report. And I will turn it over to Dr. O'Connell.

Well, thank you very much, and good evening to the board and our viewing public. So thank you, Sarah, for bringing up transportation. So I would like to ask Denise Harrington-Cohen to share a few thoughts, and some information, please.

Thank you, Dr. O'Connell. Good evening. As mentioned by President Carrier, we are initiating a bus electrification task-force, and so far we have very strong community support. I've also reached out to Hendrick Hudson to see if they would like to partner with us and combine our efforts and potentially purchasing power. And Ms. O'Mara and I had a one-hour meeting with the business administrator and the transportation director, and we have invited them to participate in the task-force if they would like. And I believe they are going to join us, so that's an exciting prospect.

They have a much larger span than we, so the buses that we might purchase might be different from theirs. Where annually our buses commute approximately 4,000 miles a year, which is very small-- where Hen Hud, I think their average bus is about 8,000 to 10,000 miles per year.

Also we've applied for an EPA grant-- The Diesel Emissions Reduction Act grant-- the DERA grant. It's a lottery grant with the potential of a \$150,000 in rebates. We will not hear about that grant until probably January or February, but I think Rochelle was the first one in for the grant this year, once the application was available.

And lastly, in an effort to take another step towards electrification, we've identified a hybrid vehicle that is on the Westchester County grant. It is a Prius-- it's a plug-in hybrid vehicle that would cost approximately \$25,000. It would involve approximately a \$10,000 commitment from the general fund. So as you recall, we had two Caravans that we lost in the storm. The insurance recovery from that, plus the delta in our bus van-- remember we did not purchase the hybrid vehicle, but we instead purchased two used student transport Caravans instead. So the difference between that combined with the insurance recovery and potentially \$10,000 from the general fund would enable us to take this step forward in this fiscal year. So I would like to put that out to the board to see if this is a direction we would like to move in.

Again, we were, I believe, the first district and the county to have a hybrid vehicle, and it was a very successful vehicle. We had over 190,000 miles on the vehicle. So the one that we're proposing would be a mail vehicle. So I just wanted to see if that was a direction that we would like to move in.

Denise, would it cover-- can you just give us guidance about whether it meets sufficient capacity and routes? I'm assuming it does, or you wouldn't recommend it, but just can you let us know, like, oh, this Prius-- the way it fits into the plan and how it's addressing our current needs?

Well, thank you [INAUDIBLE]. Yes, we do need a mail vehicle. And Rochelle has seen vehicles, looked at our mail requirement, and it is a very suitable car to our [INAUDIBLE]. Again, it would not be a student transport vehicle.

Apologies-- I confused that it might be student transport. Apologies for that. Sorry for muddying that.

Any question?

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Looking for a thumbs up, thumbs down that the board would like to move with this? Iris?

I was thinking of a question. I just want-- you say we already have a hybrid vehicle, and this will just be an additional?

Yeah, the hybrid vehicle has over 200,000 miles on it at this point. Yeah.

Well, I guess to follow up, what is that current hybrid vehicle used for?

I believe it's being used for various transport throughout the district. And I have to admit-- I'm not quite sure if that vehicle is still in service. I believe-- I'm not quite sure if it's still in service, because the battery died, and the batteries are very expensive, especially for the older vehicles. So I'm not sure where that stands now, but it did serve the district very well.

Any other questions now? So we can approve that [INAUDIBLE] for [INAUDIBLE].

Oh, how exciting.

Brian, Beth, Andrea-- [INAUDIBLE] presentation [INAUDIBLE].

Thank you.

Wonderful.

Thank you.

Continuing with my report-- John, would you give us an update on elementary standing, please?

I would love to. You may recall Dr. Mojica and Mrs. Bianchi went to incredible lengths to expedite a search for a probationary position for our upper elementary grades. Once again, this position was to fill an identified need to support hybrid learners in a general educational setting, as well as special education learners in both hybrid and remote settings. For this reason, our search has been for a dually certified candidate in both elementary education and special education.

And at our last meeting, you may recall we did appoint a talented finalist who, unfortunately, you'll see on tonight's agenda did rescind the decision to join us here, at Croton-Harmon. And there was not a runner up candidate that we are recommending from that search. So just to let the board and the community know that we have re-posted for that position on [INAUDIBLE]. We have also reached out to our partners in our local higher ed institutions with twin teacher training programs, and we are expediting this next phase of our search, and we are hoping to add a candidate to the board in a very short period of time.

OK. Continuing on with my report. This week, our Reentry Task-force met, and again, we felt that given the amount of time that we've been in school, we felt that it was a really nice time to reconvene the task-force and take a pulse check. And again, as I said to our task-force, I cannot thank them enough for the work they have done and continue to do, as we were very thoughtful on how we entered school.

So our task-force is always extremely thoughtful with their comments, so we posed the question specific to your area. So the board will recall, we had many focus areas on our task-force, such as physical plant, students and staff protocols, instructional programs, et cetera. So through the lens of your particular area, what are the biggest challenges we are seeing or experiencing with our in-person, hybrid schedule or remote schedule, and what is working well? So that was the essential question that our task-force was given this week.

So some of the working well from the subgroups-- physical plant or procurement of PPE, our protocols for cleaning and disinfecting, and the protocols we have in place when we have a COVID positive case. And the fact that school opened, and that we're back. And they even mentioned athletics. Then as the board knows, we began our fall athletic program.

Some from student and staff protocols-- mentioning the LINQ system is working well. Our green ticket system working well. Teachers and students getting used to their instructional models. The fact that we're carrying out our emergency drills in a very socially distant manner. Our entry and dismissal protocols from the beginning of school have just been getting stronger and stronger.

Again, what's working well from instructional program-- how teachers are sharing best practices, sharing techniques. Good connections are being made between students and teachers. We're hearing that students are advocating a lot for themselves and are being creative and taking charge. When I saw that in the statements, I just got a chill, because remember-- it's all about students taking charge of their realm. Seeing creativity and some techniques-- good techniques of pulling remote students in.

Some what's working well under social emotional-- that our at risk meetings have begun-- they've started. Our advisory is very helpful, and the fact that we're doing these check in surveys. And John will mention a survey that recently went out. And soon we'll have our assessment for all.

Staff training-- again, what's working well? Signs in the hallway-- very attractive or well done. The stickers are good guidelines. Bilingual signs are excellent. And just a statement about our students being so conscientious and patient in school.

Sports and extracurricular reported out that students are handling this well, and are very patient-- this came up again-- patient. Students are wearing their masks. I will tell you, I've been out at practices several days, and I just see them just so excited to be out on the field and really paying attention to our protocol. So it's very nice to see.

Also, the institution of the LINQ and green tickets for entry to practices, et cetera. So because if you think about it, you have your students who are in school, and they go to practice. They've already taken their health screener in the morning and given their green ticket in. Now we think about the hybrid students who are now coming to a practice, so we had to ensure that the health screener was in place, and that we have the green ticket system in place. So that seems to be working very well. And that our transportation bus is on time, and really supporting the buildings, as our transportation group has always done.

So some challenges or things that we should be considering-- and again, I'll go through it in the same manner-- sorry I just hit the microphone-- in the same manner as I did before with subgroups. So some things to be considering and thinking about under physical plant-- custodial time. This is really

the additional demands on our team are great, and thinking that through. Space for supplies-- we have, of course, more supplies, so keeping them in safe places.

Thinking about our operational flow from, let's say, the nurse's office to our isolation rooms. Shoring up protocols when we do have students that arrive without their green slip. So it does happen, and we have protocols in place. It's infrequent that it happens, so we want to make sure we're paying attention to our protocols there.

Students and staff protocols, some things to be thinking about-- we get this a lot. I will get this through, if I see somebody and they're just chatting with me about it, or I'll receive an email, as do our principals. A concern that students are not wearing masks outside of school. And that is something that we do hear about. Again, we talk about all of us being committed to ways to keep us safe-- ways to keep school open. We pay attention to all of these protocols during the school day-- it's important that they continue outside of school. So we do receive information from the community to share that with us.

Reminders that parents to complete the LINQ form. We have been sending out a K12 alert in the morning, and we do the same with staff. We don't send the K12 alert-- they get another reminder. But each day-- so to remind everybody to make sure we continue that.

To pay attention to our remote teachers. Just as the name implies, remote teachers are remote. So sometimes they're feeling isolated. And as a board, we have talked a lot about the social emotional, and these are challenging times. How do we keep people connected? How do we address fatigue? And so that we will remain a continued focus.

Jumping to social emotional, since I didn't make that leap-- we've been examining with our teachers, especially CET teachers have stated how they need more planning time. So again, we're living our schedules, we're living our plan now, and what I love about our task-force-- what I love about our administrative team-- is we keep dissecting that. And John will be talking about a thought exchange coming up that's just been launched-- very important that we keep reflecting.

As I said in my-- I believe it was my October superintendent newsletter-- right there in our tagline-- think, create, reflect, and respect. So right there in the tag line is about reflection. We ask our students to reflect all of the time on their work, their thinking, their processes-- it is equally as important for us. So I'll ask John to piggyback on that in a little bit on some of our other meetings this week.

Back to staff training. Again, this is under the section what should we be considering and thinking about. I have to laugh at this, because I did run into a student that said to me you know those one way hallways and the arrows-- they don't always work. Right? So then when I saw the reflection of the task-force that was one of the things that came up. Some of our one-way hallways do not always make sense. So I had to laugh, as because I thought about a PVC student that had said that to me.

So that's something you see-- the board has seen the arrows. We really try to keep traffic in one direction. And so I thought that was good feedback, so I'm sure the administration will be thinking that through.

Sports and extracurricular-- again, this is under the things to be thinking about. A major challenge that you'll hear consistently from Mr. Gulino, as well as the superintendent group, is that we have to wait for the guidance from Section One. And sometimes it's not forthcoming in a timely fashion, and so that makes it challenging, because as we have mentioned, because we have so many meetings about our reentry, we have to rethink every single thing. There is nothing we can take for granted and say, oh, that's how we used to do it. Everything needs to be thought through, and what are the implications in our new COVID existence.

So even to the point-- we just received information about spectators. We just got that information that only home spectators will be allowed. There will be no visiting spectators, and it will only be two spectators per athlete, I believe. So more to come on that. I hope I got that straight, because it just came out. So that means we have to put those processes and protocols in place for spectators coming. That means putting health screenings in place-- having enough staff to supervise. So that's what I mean by when we get things a little late-- our first competition is next week, so we're just receiving information regarding that. With that said, I understand from their perspective it just is a huge undertaking to think all of this through. I mean no disrespect by saying that-- it just makes it more difficult for us.

And transportation-- the only thing that was stated there-- took families a little time to get used to the process, but things are really smooth. So I tried to give you a flavor of what the task-force shared about what's working well, and then what are some areas that we want to be continually focusing on. So John, before I end this piece, would you-- I know we did then follow up with a meeting with CET faculty-- if you would just add a little bit more to that piece.

Sure. It was a great meeting that the CET faculty requested with Dr. O'Connell and I, along with Dr. Mojica and Mrs. Bianchi, really just to discuss their current thinking with what they described. And

really what we already knew was like all the teachers throughout the district, they're working hard, and they're dedicated to find a way to navigate what are now a lot of new complexities. And especially at CET, where there are so many different models-- some teachers teaching a split classroom model, some solely teaching hybrid in person, others solely teaching hybrid remote learners, others teaching fully remote learners-- you'll see that there's a lot of different means of instructional delivery that they're being called upon. And they're rising to the occasion-- they're working diligently and hard.

But what they expressed to us is really the need for time, and the time to really-- so much of teaching is working in isolation within your classroom. And when you're working in such a new way, to have time to collaborate with other people that are going through those same issues is truly important. And what we know is that time is always a precious commodity. We know that there are confines to the time that is allotted within the school day. We know that according to a bargaining agreement, teachers have a start time and an end time. We know that we maximize the efficiency of how time is utilized through effective scheduling. So what we're trying to do is really take a look at within those confines how we can find time for teachers to have this collaborative experience with their colleagues.

So really, when you're looking for time in a school, there are two basic approaches that you're able to take. You can find the coverage as a way to free up teachers within their scheduled time, or you can make a modification to a schedule, so that within that modified schedule, there could be perhaps more professional time allocated. So right now we're really looking at and really investigating the former, which is to find a way to find time to free up teachers within their existing schedules, so that there can be the opportunity for them to basically have scheduled time to work collaboratively with their peers.

I just want to give a lot of credit to both Dr. Mojica and Mrs. Bianchi for being incredible advocates for their teachers, and rolling up their sleeves to really have those conversations with Dr. O'Connell and I to look at our resources district wide to see how we could provide those kinds of opportunities at CET.

The last part of my report-- thank you so much, John-- is every October I share my goals. So I know this one's going to be a real shocker, but my first goal is about our reopening plan and our continuation of the work that's associated with health and safety-- operations, instruction, communication, extracurricular activities, and of course mental health. So that is my first overarching goal.

My second goal will be focusing in on, as the board knows, in the spring, right before-- in February we had our Tri-States visit, specific to our strategic coherence plan, and in the spring we received our report. Well, given what we were encountering at the time, we really just put it off to the side, and said at this point we had other areas that we needed to have our prime focus. But during this school year, I want to strengthen and deepen the work of our plan through communicating the themes found in the Spring 2020 Tri-State consultancy report. And we will eventually be sharing those themes, the report, et cetera.

But just for the public listening, the Tri-States Consultancy Group comes in-- an outside organization that actually is looking at where we were along the work of our strategic coherence plan, specific to critical thinking. So what's very nice is to have an outside organization look at your work, look at it with a fresh perspective, a new set of eyes, et cetera. So my second goal will be about communicating those themes and the linkages to our strategic coherence plan.

Again, as we heard from Sarah and continued with Denise, always determining ways as a district to be more environmentally sustainability in our day to day operations, and how we can improve our current state through educational practice. That is by empowering our community and continuing our own environmental sustainability committee. Again, giving voice to community through our bus electrification task-force We'll be talking about our energy performance contract work, and leveraging experts through consultants or ECG to plan out possible avenues for continued work in this area.

And my fourth goal also echoes what Sarah brought up earlier in her president's report-- is to examine ways on how we individually and collectively promote equity within our spheres of influence. And that's really important, and we heard that a lot through our initial work with the Metro Center, and I look forward to further deepening that work. And again, we all have a sphere of influence, and for us to-- as a district-- to be looking at through our own lens the impacts we can impact-- we can have on equity.

So those are just my overarching goals for the school year, which to me really will keep moving us closer to our vision and mission. So that concludes my superintendent's report for this evening, and I thank my colleagues for assisting.

Dr. O'Connell-- sorry I just wanted to just mention that again-- just how exciting it is that your goals and the board goals are really dovetailing this year.

Thank you, Andrea.

Actually, Andrea? I'm glad you said it. I was thinking the same thing. It was only just one goal that we have, but I noticed it was not highlighted just now. It's the one on restorative justice. And so when we get to the board reports, I do want to go into that with the board at that time. So that is the one goal that I know we do have in our--

And I can tell you that our building principles have that in theirs. And I know recently-- just to add to this, although I didn't specify it in my goals-- The Village is actually working on their police reform task-force. And the Village-- I met with last week and again this week with Jeanine King and Chief Nikitopoulos. And we will be-- Croton-Harmon will be serving on the task-force. It will be myself, Ms. Duvak, and Mr. Plotkin will be part of the task-force. And if the three of us can't be there at one time because of scheduling, we'll tag team so that we will always have-- or we hope to always have a Croton-Harmon School District representative on that very important work.

And part of that, when you read the executive order-- and I don't have it right here in front of me-- but in my initial conversation with Ms. King, I said in the executive order, it speaks specifically about restorative justice. I said which is specifically appealing to the work of the school district. And I also note that there will be a student-- I know of one, so I don't know if there will be more-- involved with the work of the task-force on the Village level as well. So thank you, Iris, for bringing that up, where it's not specifically stated directly in my goal. There are linkages to that, too in the Sphere of Influence.

Yes, and I know the building-- I remember my [INAUDIBLE] particular [INAUDIBLE].

And I know they also mentioned-- and now you're getting me all excited about all this stuff, Iris-- they've also mentioned that we had applied last school year to the Anti-Defamation League-- the No Place For Hate, and we were placed on a waiting list. So all three buildings are-- all three schools, I should say-- are in it this year. So I think we'll be hearing a lot more about those connections. So we not only have the work with the NYU Metro Center connection, and that strong wealth of information and work, and then the Anti-Defamation League-- the No Place For Hate piece, which I think will all start to coalesce into some really good conversations.

Well, thank you very much, Dr. O'Connell.

Thank you.

And Denise Harrington-Cohen and Mr. Griffiths for those very important updates. We will now move

on to new business. 3.1-- recommended action that the Board of Education approve the following proposed NSBA bylaw amendments and/or resolutions as presented.

So moved.

Well, I don't know if this really is a motion.

Well, I was going to say.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Before we vote on it, I'm just going to move first. But then I will turn it over to the chair of our Advocacy Committee-- Andrea Furey-- to discuss the proposed resolutions.

Thank you very much. The Advocacy Committee met last week with the charge that we would make recommendations to the full board. We did a deep dive into them, and I first of all would like to start by apologizing to any public who maybe were waiting to get into our meeting. We had a glitch last week, but this was-- you're going to hear about everything that we did right now.

So moving through this, we compared what NSBA recommended versus what WPSBA recommended-- or Westminster Putnam School Board Association. They also did a deep dive into this. Neal was representing us there, and just what we thought Croton might feel on these issues.

So we don't have too many recommendations that fall outside of the general recommendations. One to five were a yes-- we would recommend yes voting that. Number six, we had a yes with the addition that Westchester Putnam School Board added, which was adding to the-- it says to expand opportunities and capacities for online learning, and adding something-- the line that will be beneficial to students, because it's our feeling is that--

I can just speak to that. I went to WPSBA meeting a couple of days ago-- yesterday, I guess it was. I spoke to the person-- Ardsley was supposedly going to introduce that-- who had not yet gotten it together. He forgot. So I reminded him, and he said that his board met and agreed that they're going to add language that says-- or move to amend to add the end of that resolution number six-- the words, quote, "provided such online learning increases student learning opportunities and not to replace current levels of direct instruction."

That's great. That's even more-- yes, perfect. But I think the whole point being that yes, there are great opportunities that come through online learning, but we just want it to be for the benefit of

students, not in the place of robust learning opportunities that are in-person.

So then seven to 12, we were in agreement with. Number 13, if we could move down to that. Neal, you did a special dive into that. I think it really doesn't apply to our district. What would you like to add to that, Neal?

Very simply, what number 13 talks about is something that apparently is not a concern for a district like ours, but is a concern for some districts that do not receive the student immunization information directly from parents to the degree that we do. There is an office or system within the Department of Health where every immunization record-- every medical care provider is supposed to inform the Department of Health of immunizations that have been given to every child under the age of 19. They keep that record.

The resolution asks that the legislation should be enacted to authorize bi-directional communication, meaning that the school district that needs this information can download from that state system the information about their students in their schools, rather than copy them, hand write them, or something of that nature. I've spoken with Ms. [INAUDIBLE] about how this would affect us, because it really doesn't affect us, but for those school districts that do not get their information from parents, and school districts that provide their own health programs, as some districts do-- [INAUDIBLE] health program within the schools-- this may be of use to them.

I was concerned about issues as to whether or not this really meant we are going to be getting into areas we shouldn't be getting into, but after this discussion, it is my recommendation that we support this resolution.

Great. The committee is in support of it. Right, Sarah? Yeah. Great

I'd like to also-- that I think this is a very good idea, and I think that ultimately it could reduce-- if it does happen, it would likely reduce the necessity of the effort [INAUDIBLE] chasing parents to send in their forms about immunization records. [INAUDIBLE] pass it could save a lot of effort [INAUDIBLE].

All right. Thank you. Moving on to 14, a yes. 15, there was a lack of clarity as to what was meant by a professional parent advocate, so we would like to recommend that we would like-- we had talked about as a committee having Neal be our representative for the NSBA convention. That he get to the bottom of what professional advocate-- parent advocate means here, and then I would just like to put this out to the rest of the committee-- for the rest of the board for a thumbs up-- do we feel comfortable letting Neal, after he gets to the bottom of what's going on, make a decision on our

behalf? OK, great.

16, 17, 18 we think should be yes. 19 is a yes, but it also relates to number 27. It's about mandated-- what do you call it, I'm sorry-- 27, it's mandated reporting. Number 20, we felt that, as NSBA did, that number 19 did a better job of dealing with the issue, because it works through it through policy, and it does not leave us with an unfunded mandate. So we recommended number 19, and feel that it's better than number 20.

Now let me just add one thing on 19, so the administration understands this, the board understands this. The resolution-- you have the school board association produce and widely recommend the adoption of a policy that says that the adopting district will facilitate all school personnel. [INAUDIBLE] mandated reporters, such as teachers, administrative staff, and board members, on non-mandated reporters-- those who are not real, mandated reporters-- secretaries, custodians, bus drivers, et cetera to take every three years a course or workshop that presents information regarding signs of child abuse and reporting responsibility.

Our policy encourages non-mandated reporters to report child abuse, whether it's in the educational setting or domestic setting. So this would be consistent with what we tried to do as policy for reporting-- it would put some additional-- it might put some additional obligation, if we were to adopt the policy, to make sure that our non-mandated reporters have the training that is required.

The other thing is that this training-- they are suggesting be every three years, not just when you start your employment, which probably [INAUDIBLE] I think the reason [INAUDIBLE] said that makes sense. As far as number 27 is concerned, which we are recommending opposing, as NSBA does-- 27 says support legislation that would require mandated reporters to--

So it would be an unfunded mandate, and the committee decided they did not want to recommend that. Going back to the top of the not recommended list, we were in agreement that numbers 20 to 24-- we would not recommend them. Getting to 25 and 26, these are resolutions, actually, that are close to home. They were submitted by Pleasantville and Ardsley, and it was about increasing competition. 25 is about promoting competition between BOCES when they provide non-instructional services to districts. And 26 was they provide pretty much-- let's see, what was the difference?

For BOCES and between BOCES, meaning that it also will promote competition between BOCES and non-BOCES service providers.

That's right. That's exactly the difference. Right. And we are in agreement with Westchester Putnam

School Board to approve these.

I think we discussed in there that we wanted to bring the subject to the board, so the board understands the dimensions within which [INAUDIBLE] thumbs up and thumbs down on their recommendations.

Well, so my next question would just be, let's just open it up to any questions that the board might have on any of these items. Does anybody have any differing of opinion or--

Questions?

I was just going to say, in keeping with what we-- the practice that we've adopted-- and I'm not sure if Beth is familiar with exactly what the significance of these resolutions are. We usually give-- once we've come to the [INAUDIBLE] recommendations like you just did, Andrea, we recognize that we authorize on power of whoever is our representative there-- when they hear the arguments on the floor, to make modifications to whatever we may have agreed upon, so long as they believe it's consistent with the mission of our district.

That being said, when I reviewed the resolutions, with the exception of 25 and 26, I came out with the same outcome that you have, and I have no problem with supporting Pleasantville and Ardsley on their quest to have an open competition. So that's-- when you're on the floor and you hear it and you agree with it, you think it's a good idea, I support you.

If I may, I'd like to give a little more color on the board's thinking and on how administrators thinking on this as well. Because the reason why NSBA recommended its opposition-- so the do not want this-- it's because what they are saying is when it comes to non-instructional services provided by the BOCES-- your local BOCES, if they provide that service, should be who you are using, because it is your local BOCES. And NSBA's feeling on the resolutions committee was that by having competition between BOCES, or between BOCES as an outside entities, your services that your BOCES provide will diminish the mission of your BOCES.

They gave the example-- so for example, if Northern Westchester BOCES provide printing services, they will charge a tax. And Southern BOCES-- Westchester BOCES-- will provide printing service and charge us X minus 5%. Adopting these changes in law would say, OK, we're going to go into Southern BOCES. And [INAUDIBLE]-- the resolutions [INAUDIBLE]-- that's not really what we should be doing. Our BOCES are a regional service provider, and should not be competing with other service providers.

Like I said, though, and this is something we keep in mind. And that's why these resolutions are not is that one of these school districts-- I know that it is pleasant though funding wisely and said we were searching for a superintendent we wanted to use no other partner of northern Westchester but there in Southern Westchester in order to use partner in northern Westchester southern Westchester had to provide a waiver of their exclusivity, if you will, to provide that service. Southern Westchester said no, we're not going to give it to them.

All right.

[INAUDIBLE] stuck. If they wanted to use the buses-- to use some in Westchester, even though they thought they could get better service, [INAUDIBLE] Northern Westchester, and that's what was the impetus for these resolutions-- the one from Ardsley dealing with also going to outside and to encourage us to non-BOCES services if necessary and sometimes our district does that.

Right. Our district does do that at times. But anyway, Neal, we really thank you so much for going to Westchester Putnam and providing us with this color, as you said. I would call it a lot of information. So does anybody have any changes or any other questions regarding this? Or we could maybe vote on-- well, let me just open it up. Does anybody have anything that they would like to add or say about these resolutions?

OK. I'm thinking that because the Advocacy Committee was charged to make these recommendations, that we could deal with this all as almost like a consent agenda, and just vote on the whole thing by going around with thumbs up. So if you're in favor of what we recommended, let's please just give a thumbs up. And then Neal will be charged with bringing this forward. Great. Thank you so much. Thank you for your attention.

[INAUDIBLE] actually vote on the recommended action that the Board of Education approve the following NSBA bylaw amendments and resolutions as presented?

Well, I would not make that motion, because we don't approve that. [INAUDIBLE] the motion should say is that the board directs its representative at-- [INAUDIBLE] the board directs its representative at the NSBA annual meeting to pass our district's votes as presented, with the understanding that the representative has the discretion to change or modify a vote based on discussion during the annual meeting.

Why not just say this is what we really recommend? That takes kind of long. I suggest why not just say [INAUDIBLE] the board recommends-- approves the following recommended votes on the

proposed NSBA bylaw amendments to be completed by the board representative at the NSBA meeting.

[INAUDIBLE] it got promoted was not [INAUDIBLE] what Iris said. That's fine. I just want to--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

--because we don't approve them. It's not--

I've got Neal's down.

OK. I just thought we could get it a little bit shorter. The other thing I was just going to say is that Tracy-- when we do the [INAUDIBLE] and submitted it, everything needs to be-- well just presented-- filled in as support and-- or oppose I believe. Support [INAUDIBLE] support and opposed to all things we said [INAUDIBLE].

Did we say so moved yet?

No. I did the motion. So I did so moved.

So I will second that.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Oppose? Abstain? Motion carried.

And Tracy, I will work with you to make sure you can pass that.

Thank you. Thank you.

The motion passes. All right. So now we'll move on to item 3.2, which is the retention and disposition schedule for New York local government records. Recommended action-- be it resolved that the Board of Education of the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District hereby adopts the retention and

disposition schedule for New York Local Government Records, Schedule LGS-01, issued pursuant to Article 57-A of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Law, containing legal minimum retention periods for local government records for use by all officers in legally disposing of valueless records listed therein. And be it further resolved that in accordance with Article 57-A, A, only those records described in Schedule LGS-01 will be disposed of after they have met the minimum retention period described herein. And B, only those records will be disposed of that do not have sufficient administrative, fiscal, legal, or historical value to merit retention beyond established legal minimum periods.

So moved.

Second.

All in favor? On a question?

My question is one thing. This is a change from one Schedule to another Schedule, and we have certain places in our policies where we refer to the former Schedule ED1, meaning Education Department One, which has been replaced. We will at some point need to make the technical change to those policies to refer to the proper Schedule, which we are now adopting, but that is-- that was done sometime down the road.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Opposed? Abstain? Motion carries. We will now move into donations. Recommended action that the Board of Education gratefully accepts a donation of \$500 from New York Life as a contribution to the general fund at Carrie E. Tompkins Elementary School.

So moved.

Second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries. And recommended action that be board education gratefully accepts a donation of a book nook, consisting of a bookcase, two kids chairs, and two adult chairs from the CET PTA. This will replace the current book nook, and will be dedicated with a plaque to read the Kelly Maloney Book Nook.

So moved.

Second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries. I'd like to thank the committee members who made donations. And I would like to especially since today was officially Kelly Maloney's last day, and is starting retirement. Again, thank her for her years of service to the district. And I think this will be a lovely, lovely presentation of all the work that Kelly did over the years for us, and a lovely place for us all to remember her.

All right. And now we move into instructional personnel recommendations. Recommended action that the Board of Education approve the instructional personnel appointments as presented.

So moved.

On the question? Sorry, I actually need to set them--

Yeah, and [INAUDIBLE] seconded, almost simultaneously.

Well [INAUDIBLE]. On the question. All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries. Recommended action that the Board of Education approves the request for an unpaid leave of absence submitted by Kelly Ingraham-Friedman, teacher at Croton-Harmon High School, effective September 29, 2020 with an anticipated return week of January 25, 2021.

So moved.

Second.

On the question? All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries. Recommended action be Board of Education rescind the appointment of Jodi Sith, 0.6 FTE elementary teacher and 0.4 FTE Special Education teacher at the Carrie E. Tompkins Elementary School effective October 1, 2020.

So moved.

Second.

On a question? All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries. And now I will move into the consent agenda. Recommended action that the Board of Education approves of the consent agenda items.

So moved.

Second.

On the question?

I just have one. And that is I know some of the asset dispositions-- I see that there are a series of automated defibrillator devices that are being disposed of. Can I assume that these are all just being replaced with newer models?

Correct.

Thanks.

Yes, John.

Any other questions?

Well, I guess the only other question that I have is on the budget transfers. There are a lot of budget transfers that relate to-- for some of them some of the more [INAUDIBLE] ones I believe related to expenditures for CV-19 related supplies, purchases, filters, et cetera. Are those relating to just kind of a re-allocation of funds from one account to another, or-- I just want to make sure we all understand that those-- where the money is coming from to pay for what we have to pay for.

So Neal, to your point, that is coming out of the general fund, but we've classified these as COVID-19, because through the CARES Act, there would be [INAUDIBLE] funding and the Gear funding. We are going to have to file final cost reports for that funding, so we've isolated them under separate codes, so that we can easily identify the expenditures related to those two grants.

And that funding will-- the CARES act funding for which we will be applying for reimbursement-- that relates to expenditures in the 2021-- the current school year? Not for the spring?

It refers to spending for the 19-20, 20-21, and I believe it goes into 21-22. But we are going to utilize all of those funds this year. It's a small amount.

OK.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye

Aye.

Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries. And now you're heading into the closing of the meeting. So again, we do not have any public with us, so we will move on to board reports. We will start-- the bulk of the advocacy committee reporting out was that, but I do know Neal did also attend some [INAUDIBLE] advocacy meetings. And Andrea, if you had anything else to report out on advocacy.

No.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

On Monday.

If the meeting is coming up, and that's it.

OK.

Yeah, on Monday [INAUDIBLE] attending West [INAUDIBLE] legislative [INAUDIBLE] advocacy committee met to discuss an update on the state budget, which is in essence there is nothing going on out there. We don't know about how, according to [INAUDIBLE] Catherine Tigan-- T-I-G-A-N-- who is a lobbyist for [INAUDIBLE] who is [INAUDIBLE] used by West [INAUDIBLE]. Then the legislature is not going to be convening any time soon to deal with increased funding.

They're saying to us that if there is no financial relief from the federal government, the cuts will be permanent. But they are hoping that-- and I will give you this exact letter in terms of my understanding-- they're hoping that the government may be able to lift through to the end of the fiscal year. And so they won't have to make further cuts until the next fiscal year if there is no one money that comes from the tax.

They also noted that superintendents-- I know Dr. O'Connell has talked to us about this-- had complained [INAUDIBLE] in a letter about COVID passport problems. And there is an advocacy effort by [INAUDIBLE] to try to get the governor to realize that having school buildings as polling places on election day is probably not a good idea. That's something that [INAUDIBLE] has also been working on, but they-- as far as now, on election day, school buildings will be polling places, and I know for the primary election, [INAUDIBLE] gym was a polling place. So I'm not sure on that. I guess the question would go to Dr. O'Connell whether we know whether the county board of elections is going to use our buildings on election day in November.

Neal, is as [INAUDIBLE] putting together a Voter Voice letter for that?

They are not. They did not talk about putting together a Voter Voice letter on that subject, but that could be pushed for if we felt it was be useful. But for our district, what's happening?

So thank you, Neal. I didn't have to fill out and sign that the high school could be used or as a polling place I was told from legal that we really have to comply. We have, as you mentioned, as a superintendent group expressed our concern with that, because we are in sessions, and it violates all

of our visitor policy right now. So it really is a hardship for schools to be bringing visitors in. I have a feeling many schools are in session, because they rerouted their superintendent conference days, as we did, so that we could have more professional development in the beginning of the year. So we are in session for a half day, and we have then parent teacher conferences in the afternoon. So of course, those are virtual. So it is a hardship for districts. I have not received anything directly back from the Board of Elections stating it for sure. Tracy, did you receive anything back?

I have not.

But I do believe even though-- thank you, Tracy-- even though I haven't received yet another notification, that we are slated to be a site. So I'll look for that confirmation, but I would hope in the meanwhile that our advocacy gets to the powers that be to state that is not a good plan.

Well, that's-- as I said, that is what the WPSBA legislators lobbying group or organization is going to be doing. I can't say that I-- how much success they will have. The other thing that we discussed at the WPSBA meeting was goals for and things to focus on for the next legislative session. They had previously asked for, if you will, a laundry list of what everybody thought were important areas to focus on. I didn't come to any conclusions, and that discussion will begin or continue at the next meeting on November 2, because it's really-- there's nothing really happening until January as far as real advocacy with legislators.

And Neal, just to your COVID-19 report card-- our report card has finally been corrected, so it does reflect the appropriate information. Not an easy task, though, to have it corrected.

Can I just go back to their question of the polling in the school building? Because normally I know the high schoolers were not in session on election day. But has it-- how have they been able to present the information to the government? I know I saw your-- I think it was a K12 alert that actually went out that discussed this. Or it may have just been an emails to us. Because I want to make sure people understand the challenge that is, especially that if is in session, and our students and teachers are here, then to have at will a large section of the community coming in-- masked hopefully. Maybe not even masked.

I mean, what's the plan for how schools are going to administer this while they're trying to run a school day? I mean, I don't know-- what efforts? Is NSBA thinking of joining in with the administrators? Because this is not just like, oh, it's just another thing. This has a lot of potential impact in so many ways that I'm worried that we may need-- I would like to know more.

Well, NSBA did as part of resolutions last meeting say, yeah, they are in favor of the resolution that we do not want public school buildings to be used as polling places, even before COVID-- for other safety issues.

For security, right?

For security. What's happened as far as the legislature or having an issue with the governor's office or with State Board of Elections, as you now know.

Well, is it something-- would advocacy feel comfortable following up with WPSBA to see whether or not they can either get a Voter Voice going out, get letters going-- something? Because this to me is very concerning to have school open and the community walking through, and you have all kinds of anxiety around this particular election, that I don't know if our students should necessarily have to try to learn under that.

I would-- I am definitely in agreement with you. I'm just thinking that we can't solve it at this meeting right now. We're really on a tight time table. I'm thinking moving forward though-- so I know we have a work session coming up. I know that Dr. O'Connell and administration will be keeping the board up to date through our weeklies. But I'm just wondering what might make some good-- what might be some good steps? Is this something for maybe getting Communications involved with?

[INAUDIBLE] that's really getting WPSBA and NSBA maybe just to take some action to get these Voter Voices together. That's a lot easier and more far reaching.

Yeah. I'm thinking maybe what we could do is put a resolution together. I mean, it's getting hard to make change, but we can put a resolution together for our next meeting and send it out with the Voter Voice to the public.

The only thing is-- you know, we do a resolution at our next meeting. That's two weeks from now. The election is less than a month away.

Right. So realistically, we're not going to be able to change this, I don't think. I think we need to face that the chances of it changing is somewhere between nil and none. And so yes, I think it's important to advocate on this, but I think we also need to prepare for the likely eventuality that there will be polling in the building, and we need to put some planning around how we would do that in a way that maintains safety for students and faculty and staff. And I think we need-- that seems like something that is potentially a task or perhaps a subset of the Health and Safety Committee.

So if I could just add-- first, I want to make sure we are definitely the polling site. It does appear that we are, but I just haven't received that final confirmation. As the board knows-- as our public may know through our reentry discussions-- we use every part of the building in order to maintain social distancing. So we would not be able to have students here. So that really-- when you say, Iris, how much it's impacting-- and again, I haven't made a formal statement, because I just want to wait and see if it's a definite. But we would most likely need to go to remote for that Tuesday at the high school, and that would be for students and staff-- teachers teaching remotely off campus as well.

And then our parent teacher conferences were going to be virtual anyway, because again, we have a very strict visitor policy. So would most likely that would-- how that would play out. And then to your point, it does impact because we are here, and it's disturbing. It's just disturbing, but it is what it is.

All right. I think that rounds up advocacy. We can move on to the audit committee. Did you have anything to add?

I don't have anything to add that we didn't cover earlier in this meeting.

Do we have anything from Board of Development?

The only thing that I wanted to do was we have our board goals. And I do, which I mentioned earlier, three of them are quickly being [INAUDIBLE] which Dr. O'Connell mentioned, which are the Strategical [INAUDIBLE] Plan, Equity and Inclusion, as well as Sustainability. And we also have Restorative Justice. And one of the things we had said in mapping out our goals is that we wanted to try and start availing ourselves to learning more about those four topics, and developing an appreciation and understanding, so that we can set some sort of direction in those areas.

And so I guess Board of Development will meet, so we can give you some ideas, but if anyone has any ideas or anyone that might be helpful to start talking to us. I know I attended a-- NSBA had their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion webinar yesterday. It's a three-part series. I attended the first part, so I know there are things that are going on and being offered. But if there's any on those four topics, so that we can actually move through our goals, we'll ask you to submit to Board of Development, so we can start planning it out for this year.

Iris, I just want to let you know-- I sat in for that webinar for the last part. So between the two of us, we covered the whole thing. And we got a link to it. I thought it was really excellent webinar that we can send to the full board.

Oh, OK. [INAUDIBLE] Yeah, you have a recording of it? That is great. [INAUDIBLE] All right, so then now

let's move on to Communications.

OK. Communications Committee met back on September 16. There were a few topics. The first was that we felt that it was time to start pivoting-- I guess [INAUDIBLE] just reopening to what's being accomplished in the schools, and to move away from-- a little bit away from crisis and a little bit into the educational aspects and the psychological aspects.

And you should have already seen that in some shifts of the content on the front page on the web page, and also some of the communications that are coming out. There's going to be a-- there's Reflections coming, and we're sort of shifting the focus towards what's happening in the schools and towards the upcoming community forum [INAUDIBLE]-- community conversation. I think you got the name right. So those are the shifts in focus a bit.

We agreed to change the communication committee meeting dates. In the past, we were always meeting on the morning immediately after the board meeting, and that was a hardship both for some of the board members, as well as for administration, who are here very long and very late on the nights of board meetings. So unless there is a very urgent need, we will instead be meeting on the Tuesday or Wednesday following instead of meeting on the day immediately after the board meeting. But keep that in mind-- if there is something that we do feel-- that the board does feel needs immediate communication or immediate attention by the communications committee, we're trusting that the board will let us know, and then we can shift our schedule [INAUDIBLE].

And [INAUDIBLE] on balancing-- the next items up for communications are we're going back to the local discussion, and revise branding-- modernize branding is an upcoming topic. Oh, yes-- the Black Cow. We had our first virtual Black Cow, which we are not actually [INAUDIBLE] virtual meet the board. We had it on Tuesday. There were eight slots-- eight 15 minute slots available. Three were reserved, two actually attended.

So I would classify it a-- I would classify it a moderate success. I think it worked pretty well. There was lively discussion. I think the fact that it worked there-- I was there sort of as a fly on the wall, just to make sure that the technology was working OK. We may want to refine it a bit-- I think we need to think carefully a little bit about how we advertise it. Just as we have often had Black Cow, we were doing in person where we sit there the entire time and nobody would come. This is actually a step up of recent in person Black Cow-- that we had two folks come and talk to us. But I think we need to think about how to market it a little bit to try to get a little more of that input from our public.

And Josh, could you just hold it so that the rest of the board knows-- I know we talked separately as a wing of the Communications Committee about the upcoming community conversation. It is not a town hall or a forum, and the distinction is important because we want to strive for conversation.

I'm going to jump over to my other different document that has those notes. Give me just a moment and I will-- OK, so the official name is A Community Conversation On Equity and Inclusion in Our Schools, is the official name of the event.

We have been working with Jackie Burton and Allen Lane as well as administration on a communication plan which is pretty much complete in its design. And then Jackie is already working on language, we've heard some of it. Sarah used our language in her president's report today, and also that's going to be used going forward.

So she's worked out communications including things like, essentially, an elevator pitch for it. So what we talked about, we're all talking about it, using a consistent language. And I think that's really important for this.

As Ira said, it's not a forum, it's not a town hall, it's a conversation. We really want to listen and hear what members of our community have experienced and what they want to share with us and with the other members of the community, and create a safe place for them to share with us and with their fellow members of the community.

Can I just add-- I was really impressed with the-- I can't think of her name.

Natalie?

Natalie, yes. She will be presiding as the moderator, I guess, for the event. But what I really was impressed with, the focus, it sort of will be launch into this conversation. And the community will have two questions that they will be presented with, which is one, share with us something that you experienced in this topic on equity and inclusion in our schools. And, two, what recommendations do you have on something we can do to make it better?

I think that's really important because it's, one, bringing out what you've seen or experienced and heard. But then, two, let's move forward to the future and how we can make changes. And I think that will be a good platform.

And if we as the board and administration are there and it's a conversation, so we will be hearing, as Josh keeps saying. The goal here is for us to hear, learn. This is a learning opportunity for us. So that's

how we were fashioning it and structuring it, and we really hope-- It's a virtual event, and so we're hopeful that a lot of people will be able to attend, no matter where they are currently, to give us that feedback.

One thing that we do have a request to board officers on, or perhaps to the entire board, is we need to-- well, there is actually two. The first one is we didn't know who will do the introductory welcome from the board. So that is just something [INAUDIBLE] you say, welcome to the event, and that sort of thing, general greetings. So if we can identify someone from the board, maybe one of the officers if it's appropriate. Or if you don't want to do it, then we can find somebody else to do that.

And the other is we need some folks to help out as chat masters. So just facilitating the event which is-- because we know people will be connecting online. And they will enter, they may enter comments or statement that they would like you to speak the comment, it could be written chat. We need to have a least two people to just operate the chat.

And we need to think a little bit about whether it-- it would be nice if it was a mix since-- that could potentially be some of the current administration and someone from the board. We have-- [INAUDIBLE]

I just have a question of clarification because conversation sounds to me like there's back and forth, but then when it was described it didn't sound that way. So what is the expectation, that community members can come and answer those questions, and then what happens?

So Natalie will be [INAUDIBLE], so if someone is talking about their experience then she will start pulling out, is there anything else you'd like to say, is there anything more? And then she'd go to the second question, how do you see maybe-- what would be your recommendation on how changes could be?

So that's how the conversation will be, really with Natalie in the driver's seat of trying to help give the person an opportunity to competently explain what they want to say, or voice what they want to say. But there won't be a back and forth. It's the community's opportunity to have a conversation with us about how they feel, what they're thinking, what they see.

OK. And Natalie will sort of facilitate by, maybe, asking additional questions as needed?

Yes.

Yes.

OK. I got you.

She'll use her training to help in case someone is having difficulty putting into words what they want to express.

Got it. OK.

For those who don't know, she has done several similar events at other school districts and in other communities, at school districts and at municipal governments who've had this kind of an event. So she's done many of them, and stands prepared to help us with ours.

Does anyone have any further questions with regard to [INAUDIBLE]? All right. You do?

Policy.

Oh yes, I'm sorry. Policy--

Policy review on Friday, October 16. We will continue our work on the [INAUDIBLE] of our policies, which we kind of were working on last year, and then couldn't do in the last half of last year. So we will pick it up where we left off, and hopefully have some policy to recommend, for either elimination, [INAUDIBLE], or changes, or to keep as is.

OK. Thank you very much. All right, we'll move into polling of the board. I can start off with just a quick-- we had our first PVC Building Planning Council virtual meeting this past week, last week. Yeah, last week. And so, that was just an opportunity for people who are new to joining that group, and introduce ourselves, and also start to think about some of the goals and some of the focus [INAUDIBLE] for the Building Planning Council, or the [INAUDIBLE].

We will be, obviously, focusing on the hybrid remote instruction, and seeing how that's going-- where there are strengths, where there are challenges, what's going on there. Also, the collaboration between home and school-- that collaboration and communication, and how it's working with our remote students, and also health and safety.

So those are our initial focus areas, which are probably no surprise. But that is how the PVC Building Planning Council went. Did anyone have any other-- either Building Planning Councils or health and safety, corporate respect--

I attended the [INAUDIBLE]-- had never attended a Building Planning Council-- at Croton High School.

A small turnout. We were [INAUDIBLE] introduction, and discussion about-- kind of an introduction to members as to what the goals and the process of [INAUDIBLE] at the high school. And kind of asking the members what they thought we should focus on. So we were able to to get to a point, and perhaps [INAUDIBLE]. We'll see what happens at the next one.

[INAUDIBLE]

I have a polling item.

I just wanted to talk about the Building Planning Council at CET. And I'm sorry. Did I interrupt inappropriately? I'm having trouble hearing.

No, it's fine. Go ahead, mine is [INAUDIBLE].

Oh, OK. So I just was at the Building Planning Council at CET today, and we did very much cover a lot of the same information about what the purpose of it was, introduce the new members. Dr. Mojica led it. But we had a really burning issue, which is how is Halloween going to look at CET this year? And there's a lot of discussion. I can't really share very much, because there's going to be a deeper faculty conversation. But needless to say, it's going to have to be a little bit different this year. And the Building Planning Council was a great place to sort of kick off the conversations and get into the nitty-gritties of it. And that was it.

Josh?

My item for polling is related to some communications that were flying around in the Village Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, which has not met since we last spoke about this. But the concerns were also echoed in some social media posts. And I think it was touched on very briefly earlier, about kids out and about in the town, maskless, or not observing the social distancing, and some concerns about that.

And I just wanted to bring it to the administration's attention that there are folks talking about it. And as a lot of it is along the lines of-- I don't think it's something where there-- there was no direct call for action from the schools. But I think it's something where we could add some value, potentially, by talking about this a little bit, perhaps in advisory or in chaff, reminding students that their responsibility to act in ways that are safe extends past the door of the school.

I think it's pretty important and I think that just a little bit of a reminder that every couple of weeks might help prevent the complacency that happens-- well, I've been OK for a week, you know. You're

really good when you first hear about it, with the compliance. And then it tapers off. I think just a little reminder every once in a while could help.

I will tell you that our administrators do remind. So I think at this point I would welcome a partnership with the community, because we are not with the children beyond the school day. And I would really welcome community ideas on how we could do a wonderful partnership to keep us in school. That's very important. You're right, Josh, it is very, very important. Rules aren't just for in school. And the rules are there because they're safety rules. So thank you for sharing that. I know our administrators are constantly communicating that. And anything the community thinks we can do in terms of partnering, that would be great. But it is a partnership.

The other item that had for polling was--

Josh, just [INAUDIBLE]. Is there any possibility that the kids who-- the students apparently enjoy riding their bicycles. Is there something where maybe the Bicycle Pedestrian Committee could come up with some sort of constructive thing for the students, like he can get his bike [INAUDIBLE]. Or give them some-- give them an outlet. Instead of looking at, like, a punitive, like, rules, rules, rules, maybe give them a creative way to enjoy their bicycling. And showing that we go for a bike ride, everyone has on their mask, with maybe a little bit more structured and supported, where the behavior is somehow creative. I don't know. It's just a thought, in terms of moving away from the restorative justice hat on, instead of pounding into them rules, rules, rules, maybe give them something else to outlet their bike riding.

I think that's excellent.

I think that's great. I think it's a great idea. I also want to point out, there's sort of a flip side to this, which is that we're seeing actually more students out being physically active right now than we have in many years. Because they're being told to go outside, get some exercise. Outside activity is-- congregating outside it's safer than congregating inside, by far, if you're properly socially-distanced. Which is, I think, a good thing.

But it would be good to try out something we don't end up with, like-- I don't want to portray this as a huge problem. think a lot of what's going on is there's clumping. You get clumps at certain locations, at certain times of the day, and kind of certain businesses, sometimes.

And [INAUDIBLE], too.

And I think it's something that could be charitable. It might be something that might be worth also

chatting about with the village administration, as well.

And again, that partnership. To your point, Iris, make it positive.

Absolutely.

Anything else on that topic?

You had--

I had one other, and that was just I wanted to commend the staff on setup of this meeting. This is-- thank you, Tracy.

Thank you, Tracy.

Thank you.

The way this is set up had worked very well. It's really, really thought through well, both in terms of safety, and in terms of how we actually work the meeting. So I really appreciate it.

May I just add one more thing that I wanted to bring up, which is just because we know that our families are facing a lot of childcare challenges right now, I just wanted to bring up one more time that there is now a grassroots community initiative that some members of the school are involved with, assessing childcare needs, and trying to kind of undo the puzzle about how to provide them within using community wide resources. So right now, there's surveys open in English and Spanish. And a survey open for teachers and Croton-Harmon teachers and staff. And they can be accessed at www.crotonchildcare.com. And thank you for that plug.

Thank you. Does anyone else have anything to bring before the board?

I do. If everybody else has had an opportunity to talk, or present board-related business, I have one thing. But I don't want to interrupt anybody else.

[INAUDIBLE]

OK. So I'm going to try and get through this without crying, although I'm already starting to cry. But I wanted to say that it's with great sadness that I'm announcing my resignation from the Croton-Harmon Board. In the next coming months, I'm going to be moving to Cleveland to help a close family member. I want to thank this board and the administration for your extraordinary commitment to the

community, and for all the hard work and thoughtfulness you've brought to these very challenging times.

I'm really inspired and empowered by you all, and am deeply grateful for your stewardship of our district. I'm very sorry that I'm not going to be working with you in the upcoming years. But I'm leaving you with my utmost respect and admiration. So thank you for giving me the opportunity to work with you all, and to the community. And I'm going to miss you.

Thank you very much, Beth. And thank you for the passion and the thoughtfulness that led you to run for the board, and for the time and the thought and the dedication that you have put in to these past months that have been challenging. You have shown that you ask very thoughtful questions, and that you are always thinking of the students, and trying to do the best for this district. We will miss you very much, and wish you all the best with your move and the relocation. And I hope you and your family have nothing but the best in your move to Cleveland.

Thank you so much. I really appreciate it. Thank you very much. Thank you.

And Beth, I just want to say, you're very short-term. You probably have seen some of the hardest time of any school board member. I just want to commend you for really handling it, because it's been a lot. It's been a tough road. And to be a new board member right now, it has been really quite the challenge. And we'll-- it's sad for all of us.

Well thank you very much. And again, I cannot reiterate how much admiration and respect. I have for all of you, and for all of your expertise, and your kindness, and your care, and your extraordinary dedication to Croton. So thank you again. Because I know how hard it is, and how much time it takes, and how you're coming-- you're all working and going for meetings, from your professional life into these meetings, and how hard you all work. So thank you, thank you, thank you again.

And I just wanted to say Beth, you are amazing. And the Croton-Harmon school district, and Croton-Harmon community should be really proud of you and the service you've given. It has not-- you never batted an eye. You jumped in. You did not take any-- you were just amazing. And this is a sad loss for our district, by far. Because I know you would have taken us so much further.

Thank you so much, Iris. That's very kind of you to say. Thank you. Thank you again. Thank you again for all of your kindness. You've got-- it's really a wonderful group. This is an extraordinary group leading Croton. And it's so reflective of-- you and administration-- Dr. O'Connell, Denise, John, Karen, Debba, all of you. You're just so-- just extraordinary. And thank you for your dedication to our

children. It really shows through. Thank you again.

Well, on that note, we'll need to move on into our items for the next Board of Education meeting. And then we will be-- so the next Board of Education meeting will be our October 22 work session. And that is-- we are going to go through-- we will go through the report of Tri-States and the report that they provided in the spring. But we will also be hearing from ECG, their recommendations with regard to-- let me make sure I get it right-- energy performance project.

Very good. All right, EPC. So here's your ECG on an EPC. So those will be the main topics of our work session. So we will make sure-- actually, I think the work session spreadsheet is updated, which will allow us to go in and put in some thoughts on essential questions, so that we can get those ready for the boards, for the administration, so that they can begin to plan that work session for us.

I guess-- would it be helpful for us to see some of the documents that are going to be discussed, so that we are then able to formulate questions?

Yeah, I will have some documents for you. Absolutely.

[INAUDIBLE]

Yes, I will have some documents to share by at least three or four days before.

Again, as far as the Tri-States report--

We can get that to you.

So that we can start [INAUDIBLE].

If it's possible, even if it's in draft form, I think I would love to see the ECG recommendation more than four days before the work session, so that we can have time to formulate questions, and then allow you, allow administration and ECG, time to prepare to answer those questions.

I will do my best with that.

[INAUDIBLE] four days, but there's just not going to be enough time.

We are still in the RFI process with the two bidders. So, right now, that process takes a while. So we submit questions back to them asking for clarification, substantiation of some of their revenue projections, et cetera. So right now, we're still gathering information and awaiting that information from the bidders. But I will do, to the best of my ability.

If there's any parts that are already reasonably close to fixed, it would be just good to see, yeah.

Right. Right.

And if it's an open topic, [INAUDIBLE] we don't know the answer to this yet. That's perfectly fine.

And I have just been saying to Sarah-- and this might be-- I know we-- the board is always wonderful about getting us questions beforehand. And in this case, where the ECD recommendations are concerned, so we may have to answer questions in real time, so not to put that pressure on you.

OK.

OK?

That's fine.

[INAUDIBLE]

I understand the situation.

Well, I guess the one thing that we could provide, and you probably already received it, but the request for proposals that ECG provided to bidders, and that they are responding to might be helpful so we kind of understand the landscape of the things that they have raised, or have been raised that they are answering, and we're prepared to understand what they're going to be talking about on the 22nd. [INAUDIBLE]

We actually have the two proposals in my office. And we have one copy. They're both extensive binders, and they are available for viewing if you'd like, if you want to swing by the office. Right now, we do not have a digital copy of the bid responses, but I could probably obtain that.

OK, but I was also thinking of the [INAUDIBLE] itself. This is what we ask the bidders to focus on, which will at least help us kind of have a better understanding of the subjects that will be presented.

Absolutely. OK.

OK.

Well, does anyone else have anything else, in regard to the next board meeting? OK. Well in that case, we will move into a new 7.5 recommended action that the Board of Education enters into

executive session to discuss the employment of a particular person or persons, and to discuss contract negotiations with the ATU and CSEA custodial bargaining units.

So moved.

Second.

All in favor?

Aye. Oppose. Abstain. Motion carries. We intend to go into executive session, and immediately following exiting executive session, adjourn the meeting. So we will end our livestreaming for the night. Thank you to the members of the community who have joined in with us. And we look forward to you being able to join us at our next meeting. Thank you.