D.C. PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

BOARD MEETING

PUBLIC HEARING AND PUBLIC MEETING

MONDAY
JUNE 22, 2020

The D.C. Public Charter School Board met via Video Conference, at 6:30 p.m. EDT, Rick Cruz, Chair, presiding.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT
RICK CRUZ, Chair
SABA BIREDA, Vice Chair
STEVE BUMBAUGH
LEA CRUSEY
RICARDA GANJAM
JIM SANDMAN
NAOMI SHELTON

STAFF PRESENT
SCOTT PEARSON, Executive Director, DC PCSB
MELODI SAMPSON, DC PCSB

BRIANI BOYD, DC PCSB

RASHIDA YOUNG, DC PCSB
ALSO PRESENT
AIYANA BELGUDA, Ingenuity Prep PCS
KEN CHERRY, Friendship Collegiate Academy
KUN YE BOOTH, Friendship Collegiate Academy
GENEVA LOGAN, Friendship Collegiate Academy
MONIQUE MILLER, Friendship Collegiate Academy
LAUREN JOHNSON, Friendship Collegiate Academy
RACHELLE ROBERTS, Friendship Collegiate Academy
VIELKA SCOTT-MARCUS, Friendship Collegiate Academy

ANDREW SCOTT LOBDELL, Friendship Collegiate Academy

KELLI NORWOOD, Edmentum

GABRIELLE MONTGOMERY, Friendship Collegiate Academy Parent Representative

PEGGY JONES, Friendship Collegiate Academy

SHANNON HODGE, Kingsman Academy

KENNESHA KELLY, Kingsman Academy

STEVE MESSNER, Kingsman Academy

DOUG FINN, III, Marzano Academies

DR. JODY ERNST, Kingsman Academy
A-G-E-N-D-A

HEARING

Opening Remarks
Rick Cruz ........................................... 4

Public Comments ..................................... 9

Charter Amendments up for Public Hearing

YouthBuild DC PCS - Enrollment Ceiling Increase ........................................... 20

Friendship PCS - Competency-Based Learning Waiver ................................. 52

Kingsman Academy PCS - Competency-Based Learning Waiver .......................... 86

PUBLIC MEETING

Approve Agenda ...................................... 110

Discussion Item - FY19 Financial Analysis Report ...................................... 111

Consent Calendar .................................... 125

New Business ........................................ 130

Adjourn ............................................... 131
CHAIR CRUZ: Good evening, everyone.

Thank you for joining us for our June virtual board meeting. My name is Rick Cruz. I am chair of the DC Public Charter School Board. Joining me this evening are our other board members, our vice-chair, Saba Bireda, Steve Bumbaugh, Naomi Shelton, Lea Crusey, Jim Sandman, and Ricarda Ganjam.

Before we get to our agenda this evening, I'd like to talk a bit about the unprecedented nature of the last three months, and the impact on families across the city, and the work that we've doing at the DC Public Charter School Board.

First, the public health crisis precipitated by COVID continues to affect education across the city. As we've begun to move into Phase 2 of DC's reopening plan, DC PCSB and public charter schools are working with DC health, the Deputy Mayor of Education, OSSE, PCPs...
teacher staff, and most importantly families, to
determine what school will look like in the fall.

We support the work of the DME to have
schools align on schedules as they are able.
This is a time in our city for everyone to work
together as much as possible. And as I've said
many times recently, the coordination across
education agencies in responding to COVID has
been impressive, and commendable, and a testament
to the various leaders and their teams.

At the same time, as schools reopen,
we must recognize that each school has unique
considerations, different facilities and staff
constraints, different family preferences, and
different pedagogical philosophies.

And schools face tremendous
uncertainties. Health guidance continues to
evolve, the city remains non-committal on the
 provision of personal protective equipment, and
accountability planning is still in process.

We've already heard that some public
charter schools are electing to be 100 percent
virtual at the start of school in August. While
100 percent virtual may work for some, for others
it may exacerbate challenges such as difficulty
accessing online material, connectivity, or lack
of custodial care. We hope that most schools
don't choose this route and that those that do
find a way to incorporate in-person learning at
the earliest opportunity.

Our goal is to make sure that every
child receives a quality education with as little
risk to their health and their family's health as
possible. And we look to schools to reduce and
remove any barriers to learning.

Second, I want to reaffirm that we
believe that Black lives matter. Our community,
our city, and our country are in pain. As the DC
Public Charter School Board, we're committed to
ensuring our schools welcome and serve all
learners.

As a Board, we are also committed to
having an ongoing dialogue and examining our
practices through equity and an anti-racist lens
for DC students, their families, our schools, our communities, and our city.

We'll continue our journey by better understanding the impact that institutional and systemic racism has on our community and the Washington, D.C., public education sector. We will hold ourselves accountable to these commitments.

Third, many of you may have seen we've hired an outstanding education leader, Dr. Michelle Walker-Davis, as the new executive director of DC Public Charter School Board. Dr. Walker-Davis will replace Scott Pearson who served as our executive director for over eight years. We look forward to introducing you to her when she joins us this summer. In the meantime, you can find more information about her at dcpcsb.org/executivedirectorsearch.

Fourth, we encourage every family to enroll their students as soon as possible in a public school, whether that be a public charter school or DCPS. When students enroll, it helps
schools plan for the upcoming year, allowing them to better serve students. Families also benefit from knowing with certainty that their child is enrolled in a school for the next year.

Finally, I'd like to congratulate the Class of 2020. Although their traditional graduations were remote, some schools showed their ingenuity. One rented a drive-in movie theater to host a drive-in graduation. Another participated with LeBron James' NBA Graduate Together television broadcast on May 16th, and many others held virtual ceremonies as a way to bring their school community together. I got a chance to record videos for several of those, and I was pleased to confer diplomas virtually.

Thank you. I anticipate we'll have more updates and information about school re-openings at our July meeting and as we get deeper into the summer. But now, I'm going to move on to the business of today's meeting.

There will be a video for, optional video, for Board members and for presenters for
tonight's meeting. And as we move through each 
agenda item, Briani, our moderator for the 
evening, will unmute DC PCSB staff or individuals 
speaking on behalf of the school.

The hand raising feature has been 
disabled. Individuals who previously signed up 
to testify will be called upon. And as a 
reminder, all written public comments are 
available to the public on our website.

If you didn't sign up by sending your 
name to Briani before this meeting, please submit 
your comments to public.comment@dcpcsb.org or 
call our public comment line to leave voice mail 
testimony at 202-963-0949.

Now, I'm going to begin by inviting 
witnesses who signed up to speak to provide their 
testimony. We have three members of the public 
who signed up for comments. Please keep your 
comments to two minutes each. I'm going to 
invite Candace Davis as our first member of the 
public to testify this evening.

MS. BOYD: Candace, you're on.
MS. DAVIS: Good evening, this is Candace Davis. And I'm a former vice-principal from Ingenuity Prep.

This is an update for our most recent efforts to protect the students and families at IP. IP's Board chair, Peter Winik, invited us to meet with IP's executive team to hear about their plans for school year with hopes to satisfy our requests and resolve our concerns.

After about ten minutes of listening to the executive team, we quickly realized that no real improvements have been implemented at IP. We found issues with not only their lack of solutions but also their disturbing comments which confirm the lack of care for the lives of at-risk students.

CEO Will Stoetzer claimed that their inclusion model was a learning opportunity as if he's not responsible for researching best practices, as if we did not report concerns with a plan for corrective action in September, as if our students are test dummies and do not deserve
swift and immediate solutions to an obvious problem.

When we expressed concern about under-qualified staff serving an at-risk community with high needs, Will Stoetzer stated that they are not required to have certified staff, ignoring the difference between certified and qualified.

When we asked about the hiring process, Chief of Staff LaShawndra Thornton, someone with no education background, provided a generic response with no specific details related to the needs of our students.

When we asked about resources and training for special education staff members, CAO Jennifer Hampton stumbled around random ideas. When we asked about systems for behavior management, restorative practices, and mental health support, no one could provide a plan.

Will Stoetzer just agreed with the need for school-wide systems. Peter Winik stated that our conversation about student needs was below his pay grade, as if our jobs were beneath
In an attempt to avoid responsibility, Jennifer Hampton summed up our traumatic experience in witnessing complete chaos at IP as a perspective rather than actual fact. And Peter Winik suggested that we just, quote, Sit back and see what happens next year, as if our students' lives have no value.

Overall, the leaders at IP confirm that their only plan was to have no plan at all. It was made clear that they will do the bare minimum, at best, because current laws protect them as business owners more than they protect the basic human rights of at-risk Black students.

Peter Winik recorded this meeting, and I am sure he is willing to share it with you.

Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Candace. Now, I'd like to invite Aiyana Belguda

MS. BOYD: Aiyana, you're on.

MS. BELGUDA: Okay. Good evening, this is Aiyana Belguda, and I'm a former vice-
principal from Ingenuity Prep. After advocating for over nine months, we have given IP an extensive amount of time to correct violations. We compromised the well-being of students to follow your system of accountability.

As a result, 35 staff members separated from the school by March. Students continue to experience trauma due to the school's toxic and unstable environment, and they lost the entire year of instruction.

At this point, we are no longer asking for proof of resolution, because we know it does not exist. Instead, we are asking that you close Ingenuity Prep immediately for the following reasons.

Our students have been traumatized by the negligence of IP, and they need a fresh start with a new environment, new leaders who are willing to go above and beyond to meet their needs.

Since IP has been found guilty of several violations, and they continue to violate
the law, they should no longer be treated as innocent. And there should be real consequences for educational neglect.

There is an overwhelmingly high rate of under-qualified leaders, teachers, and staff at IP which guarantees another failed school year. Our CEO, Will Stoetzer, has created a culture of fear which means he will continue to get away with malpractice next school year because teachers would rather resign than get fired for speaking up.

Those who stay cannot afford to leave their overpaid salaries, or they choose to support the only system they know. The historical high turnover rate at the school is detrimental to the school's culture and climate which directly impacts students' academic, social, and emotional stability.

While we know parents may fight to keep the school open, we also know they were never given a real choice in the first place. So we are confident that they will see the benefits
of leaving in due time.

With that in mind, IP parents and families need a sufficient amount of time to search for a new school so students have an opportunity for a smooth transition.

We know that parent voice is highly encouraged, because IP's executive team has been successful with manipulation and deception. We are exercising our rights as educators. We all have a responsibility to protect and serve students, so we are asking that you respect our roles as former vice-principals of IP and advocates for Black children in at-risk communities.

Furthermore, there are no policies that ---

MS. BOYD: Time.

MS. BELGUDA: -- that prevent you from closing Ingenuity Prep today. We are advocating to amend those policies immediately so students' lives can come before business. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. I know after
our last meeting, and the last testimony of Ms. Belguda and Ms. Davis, that the PCSB was engaging in some follow-up steps. Rashida or Briani, could I ask you to admit Rashida Young to the teleconference or the webinar.

And, Rashida, if you could give us an update from your end.

MS. YOUNG: Yes.

CHAIR CRUZ: We can hear you. Now we can't.

MS. YOUNG: Yes.

CHAIR CRUZ: There we go.

MS. YOUNG: Yes, thank you, Rick. I just wanted to provide an update on our end. I am aware that Ms. Serena Hayes, DC's ombudsman for education, has spoken with Ms. Candace Davis and Ms. Aiyana Belguda earlier this month. And that was something that we had encouraged, because it had appeared that the conversations had broken down between both of them and the school leaders.

And I'm told that the ombudsman has
reached out to the school to schedule a
conversation which would be more of a mediation,
which is an ombudsman's role. And it's not
something that PCSB generally would facilitate on
our own.

So it is our hope that that mediation
would yield better results. The school, I
understand, also had a meeting, as they shared.
And the reflections from the school, I believe
that those conversations do need to continue
happening.

So I'm just encouraging Ms. Davis and
Ms. Belguda to continue those conversations and
to consider having the mediation as we originally
spoke of last month. Because we don't want a
meeting that they just decide should be the end
of this conversation.

We are also continuing to follow-up
with OSSE, that OSSE has purview over the
complaints that they've raised in the past. And
I bring that up to say that, you know, our goal
has shifted over the past couple of months, and
we're trying to stay in contact with the
different entities that are engaging with Ms.
Davis and Ms. Belguda and, at the same time,
encouraging them to keep an open mind and keep
those conversations going until we come to a
resolution.

I realize that's probably not the
answer they're looking for tonight, but we are
just trying to keep their conversations going and
keep everyone engaged so all parties can feel
like there's a resolution.

We have not heard from families
recently, in recent weeks. And we are certainly
open to it if there are other Ingenuity Prep
families that have concerns. But at this time,
as for the request they just made at this
meeting, that's something that we would have to
discuss offline.

CHAIR CRUZ: Rashida, the ombudsman
has also been in contact with the school as well?

MS. YOUNG: Yes. The ombudsman's been
in contact with the school. And I believe the
next step is try to get all three groups to have a conversation, so Belguda and Ms. Davis, the school leaders, and the ombudsman, to see if they can come to the resolution that has not been able to, you know, obviously they have not been able to come to a resolution in this year. And this is a different avenue that we're hoping yields a better result.

CHAIR CRUZ: Great, thank you, Rashida.

All right, at this time, I think we have one more member of the public who is listed to testify this evening, Shanta Williams. Bri, is Ms. Williams on the line?

MS. BOYD: She's not on.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Well, I can come back at the top of the start of the public meeting in case she is on at that point.

I did also want to flag one note here that there is additional public commentary, both related to and unrelated to Ingenuity Prep, is available in the public comment page of our
website so that anyone that would like to see any
other public comment that was not shared verbally
this evening can find it there.

   All right. So if our public comment
is closed for this part of the meeting, I will
move us to Charter Amendments up for Public
Hearing. And I believe Melodi Sampson will be
introducing all of those charter amendments.

   MS. BOYD: Melodi, you're on.

   MS. SAMPSON: Thank you. I am Melodi
Sampson, Senior Manager on the School Quality and
Accountability Team. This is a public hearing to
discuss YouthBuild Public Charter School's
proposal to increase its enrollment ceiling.

   The school is seeking to enroll an
additional 53 students, raising its enrollment
ceiling from 122 to 175 by school year 2021-22.

   The LEA asserts that, just as past
economic downturns have yielded increased
enrollment in adult education programs, current
economic conditions caused by COVID-19 have
created need and demand for programs like
YouthBuild.

Per DC PCSB's enrollment ceiling increase policy, the school missed one indicator because it was an outlier for exclusionary discipline, however, they meet other indicators reported in the policy.

A representative from the school is available tonight to discuss their proposal.

MS. LIBERT: Great, thank you, Melodi.

Good evening, Public Charter School Board members, staff, students, families, and members of the public. My name is Claire Libert, and I serve as Head of School of YouthBuild DC PCS. I'm honored to be here this evening on behalf of our school. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to speak in support of our enrollment increase application and to tell you a little bit more about YouthBuild DC.

YouthBuild is unique among adult public charter schools and high schools, both traditional and alternative, in Washington, D.C.

It is the only school designed to help
opportunity youth build math, literacy, and employment skills, and earn a GED, now a DC high school diploma, while at the same time providing direct service to the community by repairing and renovating housing for DC's low income residents.

We are applying for this enrollment increase for several reasons. First, the COVID-19 crisis has created an immediate need and demand for programs like ours. As we all know, COVID-19 has had profound effects on our city and our world, sickening more than two million people in the United States, throwing millions out of work across the country, and leaving tens of thousands of DC residents unemployed. According to DOES reports, more than 117 thousand DC residents filed for unemployment between March 13th and June 22nd.

We also know that the pandemic disproportionately hurts workers and those trying to enter the workforce who are already vulnerable, young workers, people of color, immigrants, gig workers, those who are under-
employed, and long-term unemployed, as well as
those who work in sectors characterized by
unpredictable and low-wage work.

9.2 million workers, age 16 to 24, for
example, are employed in service sector
establishments which have been hugely impacted by
the pandemic. This crisis has hit youth and low-
income workers especially hard. Most of these
workers perform tasks that simply cannot be done
from home, making them much more vulnerable to
job loss.

Although there are a number of
measures in place to ease the pain of
unemployment, including stimulus payments and
additional unemployment insurance, these measures
are short-term and often not available to our
most vulnerable youth and young adults such as
those who are undocumented. They will run out at
the end of July.

As Cambridge University researchers
noted in an April 2020 working paper analyzing UK
survey data, our findings suggest that the
immediate impact of the Corona virus downturn on
workers has been large and unequal, with younger
workers and those at the bottom of the income
distribution hit hardest.

If not addressed quickly, these
impacts could inflict long-term damage. So
preventing this shock from scarring the
employment progression of the younger generation,
and the less economically advantaged is of high
importance to prevent permanent damage to the
economy and individual welfare.

While this research is focused on the
UK, we're seeing similar patterns here in the US.
As an article in the April 29th edition of the
New York Times notes, for example, that hopes for
a V-shaped recovery where the economy quickly
bounces back have faded, with each month of
unpaid bills and rock bottom sales, more
businesses will go bankrupt or decide not to
reopen. More workers will drift away from their
employers, turning temporary layoffs into
permanent job losses.
Finally, a Measure of America report issued just a few days ago on June 10th warns of a decade undone, noting that all of the progress made to increase youth outcomes and lower youth unemployment over the last decade could be undone.

They explained the COVID-19 pandemic will cause youth disconnection rates to spike dramatically. We estimate that the number of disconnected youth will easily top six million and could swell to almost one quarter of all young people.

With students physically disconnected from schools and unemployment the highest it’s been since the Great Depression, young people with the fewest resources will be left even further behind their peers and face the highest barriers to re-connection. While it is clear that young people of all sorts will suffer, low income people of color will be the hardest hit.

All of that said, we also know that young people are resilient and will seek the
opportunities available to them. It is unsurprising that historically the demand for GEDs has increased substantially during economic downturns.

During the last recession, for example, we saw GED testing increase by more than 55,000 tests across the country, climbing from 692,000 tests in 2007 to 748,000 tests in 2009 and not returning to pre-recession levels until 2011. All of this evidence points to a significant need and impending demand for programming like ours.

YouthBuild is equipped and prepared to help these young people and the city through the crisis. We have developed a successful educational model for opportunity or disconnected youth, students age 16 and 24 who have dropped or aged out of school and are often unemployed.

Our model, which draws on the nationally recognized YouthBuild model, is designed to meet students where they are by providing them with personalized learning
experiences but allow them to learn and master material at their own pace, work towards earning their GED, improve literacy, numeracy, and in some cases English language and citizenship skills, while they build career and post-secondary readiness, develop work readiness skills, earning industry recognized construction certification, give back to the city by building housing for low income residents, and build life skills to prepare them for success after completing the YouthBuild program.

Our results speak for themselves. We have earned a Tier 1 rating on the PCSB's performance management framework for the past three years. Our charter was very happily just renewed for 15 years without conditions, and our GED completion rates, yield growth, and employment outcomes are among the highest in the adult public charter sector.

In March, we transitioned promptly to virtual programming with very promising results. Students have been able to continue preparing for
the GED, make progress in numeracy and literacy,
continue learning English language and technology
skills, as well as some construction training
through online curriculum modules.

Students have also joined in one-on-
one sessions with their case managers and
transition specialists, participated in
counseling, building social and emotional skills,
and preparing for post-secondary education and
employment.

Although more adults and alternative
schools opened in the city, none match our model
which combines personal learning, service
learning, and an integrated education training
approach that enables students to earn a stipend
while they attend school.

There is a high need for programs like
ours that effectively prepare disconnected and
opportunity youth for success. Even in the best
of times, demand for our school continues to
exceed the number of openings we have for
students.
In the prior two school years, we received more than 350 applications each year for just 122 program slots. So we have served far more students than we are funded to serve, typically 150 to 160 over the course of the year.

This increase would allow us to address this demand and help to ensure that both the needs of our students and our city are met. It would also allow more students to earn a stipend while they attend school.

Right now, we are the smallest adult education program, and our enrollment ceiling is the lowest in the adult education charter sector. Our current enrollment cap at 122 places severe constraints on the number of students we are able to serve and also on the ways in which we are able to meet the needs of our students in the city.

This increase would enable us to fill increasing demand in the city for qualified and experienced construction workers. As the 2020 real estate plan makes clear, construction is and
continues to be a high demand field in the District of Columbia. Moreover, construction is considered essential work, allowing graduates to obtain employment even in this uncertain economy.

While construction and infrastructure jobs are expected to continue to grow, they also provide essential entry points for disconnected youth, since they offer a range of positions with widely varying skill and educational requirements that allow students multiple access points to employment and career growth. By improving this enrollment increase, PCSB would enable us to better meet the needs of the city and our youth.

Currently, the District is under tremendous stress. Low income residents are at greater risk than ever of losing access to stable and safe housing. And with the sharp economic downturn, non-profit organizations that have historically provided housing are under tremendous pressure as well.

YouthBuild has and is well positioned to meet this need. Over the course of the past
three years, for example, YouthBuild students have worked with Brothers of Charity to completely renovate a transitional housing shelter for veterans, assisted with exterior repairs for a women's shelter, and most recently worked with Central Union Mission to make repairs and renovations throughout their main shelter in downtown DC.

As letters from our partners explain, we provide crucial support to our students and our community. Sally Cox, CFO/COO of Central Union Mission writes, As a YouthBuild partner, we have personally seen the impacts that YouthBuild DC has on the lives of young women and young men the school serves, as well as their neighbors and community members.

As the year progressed, YouthBuild students rose to the challenge of upholding high standards for professionalism as they shared space alongside our shelter's guests and staff, improving in timeliness, use of appropriate language, and conflict management.
At the same time, YouthBuild students and staff contributed substantially to creating a welcoming environment for our guests, refreshing all of our dormitories and common living areas with fresh paint and carpentry repairs. The construction skills they mastered during this process were simply amazing.

We have close partnerships with construction firms through groups, such as ACE Mentoring, that also allow us to meet the city's needs. The combined experience of construction, service, and community development prepare students for the next steps in their lives.

As I described earlier, we have envisioned a gradual increase in enrollment, growing from 122 to 150 next year then to 175 students the following year. We have the capacity to serve many more students than we do currently, especially since our model involves both academic preparation and vocational onsite training.

We are planning for a hybrid learning
model next year that will combine distance,
blended and traditional classroom learning, and
we can easily accommodate 28 additional students
as part of this model.

Thank you so for your time and
attention today. I'm happy to answer any
questions you may have.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you very much.
Board members, I'll open it up for questions.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Yes. This is Jim
Sandman. I have a question. Thank you very much
for your presentation and especially for the data
that you presented. I'm interested in what
you're seeing currently that might reflect
increased demands, what your experience is with
recent inquiries, where you stand in applications
for the coming year. What is your on the ground
experience with anticipated demand for the coming
school year?

MS. LIBERT: Sure. So like many
schools across the adult education sector, we're
finding enrollment's off to a little bit of a
slower start as we're coming out of distance learning.

Our population traditionally engages in person for enrollment, but we're working through it. We are getting applications, we're updating marketing, we're really ramping up our social media and online presence to engage with folks that are not there in person.

We are hopeful and anticipate those numbers to continue to increase over the summer, especially as the city begins to open up more and more.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you.

MEMBER SHELTON: Hi. Thank you again for your presentation. I echo the comments my colleague, Jim, made. So I just have a quick question about what you've seen with the students or the graduates that you've had. What has their employment been like over the last two years or so? So, you know, how many of them have found employment in the construction industry and any other information you can provide about how your
graduates are faring in this current market.

MS. LIBERT: Sure. So I can give, especially one case of a recent graduate who, through that connection with ACE Mentoring, you know, she participated not only in our construction site but through intensive mentoring with construction experts across various fields, so plumbing, and engineers, and architects.

And through that partnership, she was actually given an apprenticeship with Smoot Construction. She's still employed there. She's phenomenal, she actually comes back to continue assisting with the ACE Mentoring program. And so overall, I mean, she's a great example of one student who has really invested in construction, has thrived in that field.

Overall, our employment numbers are strong. I mean, I think right now we're still, you know, kind of feeling out students and former students as they navigate the recession themselves. But overall, the results have been positive.
MEMBER SHELTON: And when you say positive, do you have percentages as far as how many of the students or graduates have found employment in construction? And then now that we're in the pandemic, are they able to do virtual learning at all?

MS. LIBERT: For virtual learning, yes. Certainly, there are limits to virtual learning for construction. However, HBI, the Home Builders Institute, through which our students earn certification, they very quickly opened up some online modules, so students are able to continue learning.

However, of course with construction there are limits to what you can learn online. Certainly you cannot as easily demonstrate the ability the hang drywall over a computer. But we're very excited and hopeful now that the city has entered Phase 2 that we'll be able to demonstrate those skills and continue completing certifications with students in the fall.

Regarding our employment numbers,
every year we have exceeded our employment
targets, as you can see on our PMF scores. And
generally, you know, we use construction as a
vehicle for overall employment and employability
skills.

Not all students go into construction
after YouthBuild. But that's okay, we don't
expect them all to. It's a means to re-engage in
school, to support to the community, and
generally develop those soft skills as well,
preparing them for almost any career.

MR. PEARSON: Claire, just following
up on that, you say not all go into construction.
Do most go into construction? Is it 50 percent,
is it 20 percent, is the student who you cited
the only student who went into construction? I
just can't get a sense of what the numbers are.

MS. LIBERT: Sure. So certainly not
the majority of students go into construction.
They go more into other fields, they continue in
hospitality, they, sorry, they continue in
hospitality, they work in sales, they have a
whole variety of careers.

   Again, construction for us is not the
only means for them in terms of employment and
career. After this, it's much more about overall
employability skills and being able to be
employed in any setting in any field.

   MR. PEARSON: I'll ask again. Is the
student you cited the only student? Is it 10
percent, is it 20 percent? We've now determined
it's not 50 percent. But I still am not really
getting a good sense of what the numbers are.

   MS. LIBERT: I would say anywhere from
10 to 40 percent of students go into, or 10 to 20
percent, excuse me, go into construction after
YouthBuild.

   MR. PEARSON: Thank you.

   MEMBER GANJAM: I wanted to ask a
little bit about your discipline rates. We've
noticed that you are an outlier for disciplinary
rates. And then in 2018-19, you suspended 15.6
percent of your students. So I wanted to better
understand what are you doing to address the
discipline rates.

MS. LIBERT: Absolutely. So I became interim head of school in November. Since the start of January, we haven't had a single out of school suspension. I know that's a limited window through the school closure in March. But there was a huge pivot in my coming on into that position to much more inclusive disciplinary practices.

As I think I mentioned during our meeting in January about our renewal, we are very excited about beginning to implement more restorative practices at our school. After a many-month's long search, we have finally found a incredible candidate to lead that work at our school. And they'll be joining our team in July.

And so that person is absolutely charged with leading our work to ensure students are present, that they are ready to learn, and that they're preparing to succeed after YouthBuild through all of these sort of soft skills that we've talked about and leading
through those.

They're, you know, well positioned, they have a great background in restorative circles, in responsive classrooms, and all of those great strategies. I'll be working closely with them over the summer to revise our student handbook and all of these practices so that we can continue the progress we were making with the start of 2020.

MEMBER GANJAM: Thank you. And what do you attribute, I mean, from November through January timeframe, what were some of the strategies that you used and some of the challenges that you saw around discipline?

MS. LIBERT: Sure. So partly it's -- I'm a former educator myself. I started out my teaching career at Ballou. I know very, very deeply the importance of building relationships with students, so to invest a lot of time and energy in that.

Part of the challenge too was the school needing to refine and reinforce its kind
of regular structures and procedures, giving more routine and reliability to the day, which helps, you know, everyone feel calmer, they know what to, everyone, students and staff, know what to expect, what's coming next, which helps kind of on the front and prevents a lot of disciplinary issues.

I think too we implemented new protocols for making decisions around discipline, so really taking a beat to take a breath, to talk, to walk through different options, and making sure we were hearing from everyone involved in an incident before moving forward with any kind of consequence.

MEMBER GANJAM: Okay, thank you.

MEMBER SHELTON: This is Naomi. I have a question about your engagement with the community that you serve, both internal and external. As you were developing this proposal, did you receive input, did you request input from those two different communities? And how did that input influence your plans?
MS. LIBERT: Sure. So we did reach out to our ANC Commissioner. We have not heard back, unfortunately, on the front. However, all of our community partners, and our students, and our staff are engaged in this process. We're excited at the possibility of having more students.

And Sally Cox at Central Union Mission mentioned, she would love to have more students engaged in the work. And they were very excited about that partnership as well.

MEMBER SHELTON: And any input from some of your graduates, or current students on how you thought about developing or submitting this plan?

MS. LIBERT: Sure. So I mean, in part, when I took on the role of Interim Head of School mid-year, I engaged in a series of small focus groups with different groups of students to get a feel for what they're looking for in the school, what they're excited about, what they'd like to see change.
And we also conducted a survey of any students who were not in those focus groups as well. The sorts of programming that they're looking for we're very excited about but would be better able to provide if we're able to grow a little bit more and have that flexibility.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thank you.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: I have a question, Ms. Libert. I hope I'm pronouncing your name correctly. First, thanks for all the great work you folks have been doing over the past 15 years. You're talking about adding almost 50 percent more students. What kinds of changes are you making to the organization to accommodate for this kind of growth?

MS. LIBERT: Sure. So I think a big part of that, I mean, in my mind one of the most exciting parts of that next year is, again, this restorative practices coordinator. I think, you know, as Melodi mentioned, one of the areas that we need to grow in is that school culture and discipline.
And this person will grow that work out so much and ensure that we have this strong welcoming, encouraging, but also accountable school culture that we need, not only to recruit and enroll new students, but maintain the engagement of current and former students as well.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: What were some of the issues YouthBuild's facing on the discipline front? I ask because I'm trying to, I think, and somebody on the staff can correct me if I'm wrong, that we tend to see, I think, significantly lower rates of suspension at the adult schools that tend to have highly motivated, older students who are looking to become employable. What have the issues been at YouthBuild in this regard?

MS. LIBERT: Sure. So our student population is a bit different than perhaps Carlos Rosario's might be. Our students are, right, 16 to 24. Some are actually still minors. A fair number are coming to us from outside referrals,
even from parole officers. They've been, you know, court involved previously. They're trying to get back on their feet. Or they've been out of school for a couple of years and trying to get back in and finish up the work that they'd started earlier in high school.

So along that path, you know, if you've been out of school for a couple of years, that re-entry process can be bumpy. You know, there's a time period for adjustments, responding to rules and expectations.

I think if we're looking back on some of our more serious incidents this year, some of it has been an interesting or challenging combination of, frankly, relationship violence that comes into the school.

Those have certainly been challenging incidents and more frequent than we'd hope for where, again, the restorative practices the coordinator is charged with really leading the work to support and prevent some of that, so doing some, you know, relationship and
communication training with students as we look ahead.

In prior years, some of that might have been, you know, small fighting, or things like that. That has been less of an issue this year.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Thank you.

MEMBER SHELTON: And then I, sorry, Rick, have one last question. How have you all seen the engagement with students now that you're in a virtual space? And then what do you anticipate the fall looking like pre-fall?

MS. LIBERT: Sure, certainly. We pivoted, like I mentioned previously, to distance learning. We've averaged about, looks like, let me pull up my numbers. We've averaged a little bit shy of 40 percent of students engaging every week.

That number, through a variety of strategies, continued to increase throughout the distance learning period. So -- the students earned, I'm sorry, or participated in an average
of about 170 hours of live instruction over the
course of March 16th to June 12th.

That number increased every week from
March to about Memorial Day, and only a little
bit of a bump. But overall engagement was pretty
strong. Students persisted through. More than
60 percent of our students picked up Chromebooks
and continued to engage in instruction over that
period.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Go ahead --

(Simultaneous speaking.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Who is that?

MR. PEARSON: Claire, I had a question
about what we refer to as net mobility. So what
we see at all of our adult schools is very high
levels of attrition where, you know, adult
students, be they opportunity youth, or older
students enrolled, but then their life takes over
and they're not able to continue.

And so we typically see, you know,
withdrawal rates throughout the year of 20 to 60
percent. But we also see schools then re-enroll. So students leave, and then maybe when the next semester begins, the schools re-enroll and fill the school back up. So that when we look at what we call net mobility, we find that, you know, the school's lost a lot of students, but they've brought a lot of new students in and so net mobility might be actually positive. The school enrollment grew. Or it might only, the net might only be down by five or ten percent.

But with YouthBuild, the net mobility is closer to 30 percent. So, for example, last year the school started with 118 students, lost 50 students, but then only enrolled 15 back. Or the year before, your school started with 122 students, lost 73 students, but only enrolled 39 back.

And so my question is what explains the inability to re-enroll up to your full enrollment level? And should that be a flag for us that perhaps the school may have trouble filling its seats if we were to increase the
school's enrollment ceiling?

MS. LIBERT: I think rather than a concern, it's been a strategic choice in prior years. It's much -- It's been focused on sort of, you know, maintaining the structure. When you bring new students in, it can add some, not chaos but it's more, you know, you have to have orientation happening at the same time as classes. And so in prior years they've only done that a few times a year.

Our program is also just a longer term program. It's not, you know, meant to be done in a couple of months. So we do keep students on longer.

When we look ahead to next year, though, we've been in talks with the leadership team about finding ways to maintain the structure and keep classroom programming very smooth, with minimal interruption, but also do those re-enrollments more frequently, potentially as much as every month or every other month.

MR. PEARSON: Thank you.
CHAIR CRUZ: So I have a question, and maybe this will be a closing question that will bring us back to where my colleague, Jim, started us.

So, Claire, in lieu of enrollment data, which I understand is in short supply right now in terms of an indicator of demand, what are you and your Board looking to, to justify the need to grow at this particular moment in time?

MS. LIBERT: Sure, and it's a fair question. I think it's more we like the opportunity to try and grow, right. As I've said, we're a Tier 1 school, we've been a Tier 1 school for the past three years. We're a good program, it's a great quality educational experience for students.

And we do sincerely believe that, you know, once we get through some of this initial, the challenges of enrolling and recruiting during social distancing, that the demand for the school really is going to rise. And we don't want to have to turn students away in those
circumstances.

CHAIR CRUZ: But why the demand for this particular model? I guess I'm stuck on that as I look to, you know, in opening, you're basically asking for a higher enrollment ceiling two and half months from now, two months from now.

MS. LIBERT: Yes. So part of that is that, you know, our students are provided with a stipend, right. There's an immediate economic benefit just to participate in the program as well as all of the supports that we provide are around not just, you know, construction and certification but also what we call transition, so job resume work, job applications, mock interviews, all of that work to prepare them as quickly as possible for part and full time employment.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. I, for one, am still a little bit unsatisfied with the demand analysis. I agree, you have met many of our requirements. But I'm still struggling with that
last piece of it.

Are there any other questions from other Board members?

Claire, thank you for joining us this evening. I believe this will be. Melodi, up for vote next month?

MS. SAMPSON: Yes.

CHAIR CRUZ: Excellent.

MS. LIBERT: Thank you so much.

MS. SAMPSON: Next, we will hear from Friendship Public Charter School. They are requesting to offer competency-based learning units beginning in school year 2021 to their 9th grade through 12th grade students who are enrolled in or complete courses at Friendship Collegiate Online Academy which includes students who are enrolled at Friendship Collegiate and Friendship Tech Prep High School.

Given that Collegiate Online appeals to students who seek greater flexibility, for example, students who are dually enrolled, those who have internships, and student athletes, the
LEA believes the program will be of benefit by
allowing students who advance in a course without
the constraints of time.

Representatives from the school are available this evening to answer the Board's questions.

CHAIR CRUZ: I think we have several people join from Friendship. So if you'd like to introduce yourselves, I don't know if someone is going to be the lead spokesperson, and any opening remarks you have before you entertain questions.

MR. CHERRY: Sure. My name is Ken Cherry. I am the chief of staff with Friendship, and I'll let the other members of the team introduce themselves as well.

MS. MILLER: I'm Monique Miller, Director of Performance Reporting and Evaluation.

DR. JONES: Good evening. I'm Dr. Peggy Jones, the principal of Friendship Collegiate Academy on campus.

MS. BOOTH: Good evening, Kun Ye Booth,
principals of Friendship Tech Prep Academy.

MS. LOGAN: Geneva Logan, Special Education Coordinator, Friendship Collegiate Academy.

MS. JOHNSON: Good evening, Lauren Johnson, Upper School Academy Director, as well as working with Ms. Miller on our admin. online for Collegiate.

MS. ROBERTS: Good evening, Rachelle Roberts, Senior Director of Student Support Services from District Office and Special Education. ELL and 504 programs come under my umbrella.

MS. SCOTT-MARCUS: Good evening, this is Vielka Scott-Marcus, and I'm the Chief Academic Officer at Friendship Public Charter School.

MR. LOBDELL: Good evening, folks. My name is Andrew Scott Lobdell, and I am actually with Edmentum, the partner for Friendship Charter.

MS. NORWOOD: Good evening, everyone.
my name is Kelli Norwood. I'm the director of Academy Professional Learning for the partner, Edmentum, and happy to be here tonight.

MR. CHERRY: And I think that might be everyone. So I'll go ahead and provide opening remarks. First of all, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about our request to offer competency-based units to students who take courses at our Friendship Collegiate Online Academy.

For over 20 years, Friendship Public Charter School has been committed to ensuring all students who attend a Friendship High School campus get to and through college. The first step in this process is graduating from a high school, graduating with a high school diploma. Approval of this request supports this commitment and our mission.

Friendship seeks to meet the needs of all students to ensure that they graduate in four, five, or even fewer years. Obviously, competency-based regulations were passed by the
state Board of Education to allow schools the
flexibility to meet the needs of all students.

Often when we think of competency-
based learning, we think of providing students
the opportunity to understand course content at
their own pace, usually meaning allowing for more
time and alternate ways of demonstrating mastery.

For the Friendship Collegiate Online
Academy, we are seeking to shift this thinking to
include instances in which students need less
time to master standards. What is great about
our online high school program is that it already
allows students to work at their own pace and
sometimes, when needed, give them the opportunity
to demonstrate mastery in a different way.

In this proposal, we are asking that
the time element of acquiring hours be removed.
There are students who need more time, and there
are students who may need less time, depending on
the subject and the unit of study. With your
approval of this request, we can further meet the
individual needs of students beyond how we meet
them currently.

Friendship shares your staff's conclusion that this shift will result in increased rates of course completion which will contribute to higher graduation rates. Friendship will also ensure that all students, especially students with disabilities and ELL students, will not only have access to the programming but also the support of our student support services team and ELL instructors.

Whether it be for a job, the need to take care of a sibling, or sports, there are many reasons why this amendment is important for you to support.

Joining us this evening is Gabby Montgomery whose child, Robin Montgomery, has been enrolled with Friendship for five years. Robin is a rising 11th-grader at the Friendship Collegiate Online Academy, and Ms. Montgomery is here to share with you her experiences with the Academy and why approval of this request is needed.
MS. MONTGOMERY: Good evening, thank you for having me. Friendship Collegiate Online Academy, part of Friendship Collegiate Campus, is the primary reason my daughter is the number one girl on the college recruiting list for tennis as a rising junior.

Without the partnership from the campus-based administrators, the teachers from EdOptions through Edmentum, and technology, Robin would not be able to do what she does.

Over the past two years at the Collegiate Online Academy, Robin has always had access to teachers and resources. Robin communicates with her teachers via email, phone, and text.

Due to her schedule, she misses the online Zoom help session. However, she receives the recordings of the lessons and then follows up with her teachers as needed. The teachers and administrators at Friendship are extremely responsive and are always there to help.

Competency-based education provides
students with individualized learning opportunities and creates more pathways to graduation. Competency-based learning will benefit Robin. She will be able to complete course work at her pace, and it will remove a level of stress trying to reach the seat-hour requirement when she has already achieved academic mastery.

Competency-based learning creates flexibility for students to have an individualized high school experience. When more time is needed to achieve mastery, the option is there, reinforcing character traits such as perseverance and persistence. When academic standards are achieved in a short amount of time, students have the opportunity to delve into a content area that they are more passionate about.

We have to ask ourselves what matters. I believe that achieving specific academic standards is more important than meeting the time requirements. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. I open it up
to my board members, if anyone has any questions at this point.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: I have a question.

So for the Friendship team, the case for competency based learning has been made pretty -- makes a lot of sense. It's been in the ether for the last decade or so. What is it about moving to a competency-based instruction that has you nervous? What's the big challenge you think you face? There must be some or you would have done this a long time ago.

MS. MILLER: This is Monique Miller speaking. I think that when we first applied for the online academy back in 2018, we wanted to offer competency-based units as part of our program at that time. That was also based on a boot camp that we had with a combination of Friendship collegiate staff and teachers and students, as well as tech prep teachers and students, and even parents assisted us from our Friendship online campus that serves Grades K-8.

And we were very interested, I think, at the
time.

Just in speaking with the staff at PCSB, I guess there was concern about how it would be done. And so now that we've been engaged in this work for two years, going into our third, we've had an opportunity to work at the high school level, even though we've been working with our K-8 campus for a number of years. We've been able to see how the students work.

And so I think we're excited about the opportunity to offer this option to students. We have heard from students where they are a little bored, and staying engaged is sometimes challenging because they may have experienced content at our K-8 online school, and they're coming into this environment. So they're really, really working hard to stay engaged when they have to sometimes repeat content that they've been exposed to or have not had the opportunity to demonstrate what they know in advance.

We have been not offering courses with
pretest for students taking courses for the first
time out of concern that if they tested out of
many of the units, then they would not accumulate
the requisite hours. Instead of being afraid, I
think we're really excited about what this could
mean for our scholars both who are full-time
enrolled students at Friendship Collegiate Online
Academy, as well as our students who may be
interested in taking Singleton courses, in
addition to what they're studying in their brick
and mortar schools.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: So Ms. Miller, then
the online academy has been something of a pilot
for broader expansion of the competency-based
instruction?

MS. MILLER: Not really a pilot. It's
an academy that we think enhances our Friendship
Collegiate Academy. And we believe that this was
something that our families wanted, and we wanted
to be able to offer it to them. Doing it in
partnership with collegiate, with the supports
and the extracurriculars that they have there, it
just allows us to offer our students a much more robust programming.

All of our students who are part of the Friendship Collegiate Online Academy have access to all of the extracurriculars, all of the opportunities in terms of college trips and things like that. So we see it as an opportunity to be in an environment that is supportive of all scholars.

MR. CHERRY: And just adding on a little bit to what Monique said, being able to offer this will allow other scholars who aren't enrolled full-time in the online academy to take Singleton classes and participate in adding to their current course work and their current schedule. So again, not necessarily a pilot, but like I said, an opportunity for even others outside of the online academy to earn additional credits while also attending their brick and mortar classes.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Thank you.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Hi, thanks everyone
for your presentation tonight and your responses so far. I'm curious how, if at all, would the model need to be adjusted if there's so much uncertainty right now, if it looks like in-person school is not going to happen in the fall and all learning might need to happen virtually?

MS. MILLER: This is Ms. Miller again. I'll start. Well, we've been doing this with our current full-time online students. At the beginning of the year, students would come in twice a week. We thought that was important. Well, we actually started with the Summer Bridge Program as ninth-graders getting to know each other, so they came every day, and then in the fall transitioned to twice a week. Then we transitioned that to once a week for those students who didn't need as much support transitioning to ninth grade.

Whether it's an online program or brick and mortar, I realize for those students transitioning to ninth grade, sometimes it's a difficult transition. So we wanted to make sure
that they acquired the study habits that were needed as a high school student. Us coming together was about building that rapport. So when we transitioned to full-time virtual where we weren't meeting, we actually meet more often in Zoom sessions. We communicate with our students more frequently than we did when we were meeting with them once a week and having those face-to-face meetings.

Now we have transitioned, we are beginning again our Summer Bridge Program today, as a matter of fact. What will be important is meeting with our students frequently throughout this period of time to again build those relationships. I think that the more we communication with parents and the students and they have an opportunity to meet with each other, that will go a long way towards alleviating just the challenges of being in a completely virtual environment.

I just think that the communication and reaching out to parents will be very, very,
very critical. Hopefully, once we're able to
return to school in some sort of capacity as
we're planning through and going through the
stages, whether it's an alternating day or
whatever, or just meeting in small groups, to
have that time to connect in person will be
critical. I think we're doing it now and I think
we've all learned that we just have to make sure
that we're doing more check-ins with students,
that we're talking to parents and that parents
and students feel that they have access to us.

Our students don't meet in person with
our online teachers, but I have to tell you that
many of the teachers build great relationships
with the students over the course of the year,
because when we have live Zoom sessions or office
hours, initially I would meet with the students
and the online teacher so that the students would
feel comfortable communicating with the online
teachers. But the online teachers are very, very
persistent.

They ask parents and students their
preferred method of communication, and they will communicate with families in that way. Our students definitely have some favorite teachers, because they engage often with them in face-to-face sessions and one-on-ones even.

MR. CHERRY: And just adding on to what Monique said, I don't know if there would be a lot to change. When we think about our online students, whether they are K-8 students or high school, when buildings were closed due to the recommendation by DC Health, our online students didn't miss a beat. Their content is already online, their platform is already online. When we think about the unreachable students, I know we have a complete report, it was very easy to say for our K-8, as well as our high school academy, that they were zero. Everyone was reachable during that time. They really didn't miss a beat.

I think the one new thing that we would have to prepare would be the preparation for the pretests, and making sure that as
students sign up to take new courses, that they
would be allowed to take the pretest, therefore
chunking the curriculum and basing the actual
course around what the student needs to master,
not all of the things that they have already
mastered, but also need to learn, as well.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Thank you. I would
like to clarify. If you anticipate that there
may be more demand for this program, will you
have to adjust resources so that there are enough
teachers available or there's enough whatever
available, so that if there are more students
that are interested in accessing this, they'd be
able to.

MR. CHERRY: Well, we currently have
an enrollment ceiling of 51/15, so we know that
we have the ability to take on more students. I
would also add that we currently use the teachers
that are provided to us through our EdOptions
platform. They take on that responsibility of
making sure that students have access to
teachers. Like I said, we would be able to meet
that demand.

Currently our online high school is at 88 percent capacity at this time, with respect to registration. We know that there's a demand and people are looking for this, so we've been working exclusively with our partners at Edmentum to make sure that we have all of the things provided for them. We've already gone ahead and made sure that we have the necessary technology, as well as internet hotspots for more students. To your point, we'd be able to meet that demand.

MR. LOBDELL: This is Scott Lobdell. I'd like to just also add that the one thing that we'd like to do as a partner is stay in touch with Friendship Charter. We generally have weekly meetings, so we are always prepping for anything that they actually would need. If there was a need for more teachers, that is something that we can actually bring on rather quickly.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I asked about how this program would meet English learning needs. Can someone talk a little bit about how this
looks for English learners?

   MS. ROBERTS:  Good evening. This is Rachelle Roberts. When we think about our ELLs, the same structure that we have in our brick and mortar, where we have a coordinator for our ELL students -- if a kid was to come into the program, they would still have their home language survey. That survey would then let us know if we needed to assess them and give them the WIDA assessment.

   Then an ELL plan, depending on how they tested, will be written for support. Not only would they participate in the core content of the online program, but they would also get the ELL support needed through an ELL teacher that we actually have within our network.

   MR. LOBDELL:  This is Scott Lobdell again with Edmentum. We have tools, actually, that are actually built into our curriculum that will help those students and support them in the language that they speak naturally. We also allow, because what is the beautiful thing of
online learning, is the fact that students can pace at the pace that's most comfortable for them.

What we have found over the years -- I've been actually doing virtual education for 20 years now -- is that by allowing students to be able to learn at their own pace, and also give them those support tools, such as translation tools, as well as other supports like guided notes and such, with the help of our partner school, Friendship, that student is going to be able to be well supported.

MR. CHERRY: And the way in which we support our ELLs is also very similar to the way in which we support our students with disabilities. As Ms. Roberts also noted, the plan that developed for ELLs is shared with our Edmentum teachers. They do make any modifications and accommodations for instruction, so when the student is participating in a whole group session or in office hours with their teachers, they're able to do that.
As noted, too, by Ms. Roberts, when students need additional support, we would schedule that student to visit one of our classrooms, whether it be a collegiate or a community office where they could actually work with an ELL teacher and support them with implementing their ELL plan.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Thank you.

MR. CHERRY: You're welcome.

CHAIR CRUZ: Since the Edmentum team is here, I'll follow one question specific to supporting students with IEPs, could you speak to your organization's work with other partners on that particular priority area?

MR. LOBDELL: Sure. In fact, what was amazing that we've learned over the years is the number of students that we have worked with who have IEPs and 504s at many school districts around the country, and now even the world that are looking for answers for students who have those special needs. Our team is well trained in working with those students, through both
experience and also the training that is provided
for them through our company.

We also have, again, some of the same
tools that will help these students with both the
concept of again, the pacing situation, but also
support tools, the guided notes I mentioned
earlier, the ability to increase size of text.
There's just a multitude of things that we can do
as far as the software is concerned, but then I
would add the teacher part. Kelli, would you
want to speak on that a little bit?

MS. NORWOOD: Absolutely. I like to
always think of it as it's really no different of
what we can do in a virtual environment versus
what we can do in a physical brick and mortar,
even if it's almost more specific and more
personalized for the student. What's neat, as a
former classroom teacher of 15 years myself, is
that we always had that challenge of trying to
differentiate and meet kids where they were at
when we had a large class size and we had to get
to a certain spot by a certain amount of time in
order for high-stakes testing.

What's beautiful about the virtual environment and the flexibility is we have more freedom and time to meet with those kids and meet them where they're at, and really get to know what their strengths and their weaknesses are. Not only how our content, but how our instruction can really support them in that learning process.

One thing we do here at Edmentum is we have a ton of professional -- I'm actually in charge of the professional learning department.

Our teachers go through all of what a regular teacher in a brick and mortar would go through in terms of professional development. We have special education teams here. But sometimes to work with some of our partner schools specifically, that is one of the services we do provide. But those teachers also consult with our teachers on reading IEPs, as well as we work really, really closely with the site school SPED team or director, making sure that we're meeting the accommodation and modifications, and even
more so, being a partner in that student's education.

As the instructional team, we see things on a daily basis that may not be in the IEP or that have improved or need some visibility to them. We work with the site to make sure that we're supporting that student. We have teachers that sit in on IEPs as a general education teacher and provide their feedback of how the student is doing with the families. We have a really great partnership with our schools, as well as the guardians, in making sure that we are all having a really strong feedback loop to supporting the student.

It's really an environment where the students that are from special populations can thrive and not feel that anxiety and that pressure of I have to know it by now or else I'm going to be left behind. Or I feel so insecure because maybe I don't feel like I'm at the same level as all of my classmates, and I don't want to take risks and ask questions, and I don't want
to say when I don't know something.

The neat thing about virtual and personalized education is those students can be in an environment with just the teacher to create those questions in that really safe place so that learning can continue to go on. As well as our content has so many structures for special populations, whether like Scott said, it be highlighters or translation or guided notes. We have glossaries and vocabulary and dictionaries, all built within the actual learner management platform. That is just an additional resource on top of our high-quality instruction that we provide.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MEMBER SHELTON: I have a quick question -- this is Naomi Shelton -- about how students themselves track their progress. Just the frequency advisors will meet with students, and then to what degree will students have the ability to monitor their own progress?

MS. NORWOOD: Monique, do you want us
to take this?

    MS. MILLER: I can start it and then you can jump in.

    MS. NORWOOD: Okay.

    MS. MILLER: Through the Maestro SIS and PLATO Courseware platform, every student logs in to see where they are every day, and so does their parent. The students know if they're off-pace, on-pace, ahead of pace. They know their current grade based on the assignments that they've completed, and they know what their grade will be at the end of the course if they did no more work.

    There is a pacing bar that lets them know where they should be, and if they hover over that bar it tells them what the pacing goal is based on where they are in the course. We enroll the students in courses. They know our first day of school and they know the last day of the semester. They also anticipate general national holidays, so they pace out the course according to the school calendar. Students know where they
are.

In terms of who they meet with, they meet with their teachers every week. They also meet with me, and now Mr. Sherman:. Thompson, who is the lead of the Friendship Collegiate Online Academy, more than once a week. We will be having Friday check-ins, Friday data review so that students know what it is they need to do to either get on pace or how to connect with their teacher to get the additional help that they need. They will also be meeting with the collegiate ninth-grade guidance counselor, as well.

Member Shelton: Thank you. I don't know, Kelli, if you were going to add to that?

Ms. Norwood: No, Monique just really summed it up for us. I think one piece that's important from our vantage point is we really encourage student advocacy and that they really understand how the system works and that they're very clear that we have orientation within our platform, and then we work really close with
Friendship in ensuring that all parties, all stakeholders understand the systems and understand what they do with them, and how they can understand the pacing.

But we also are always looking at ways that we can improve that process and that communication piece, as well, from a company standpoint. I can say that we're really excited about a few new features coming out. One of them is even a career path that will be launched this summer. What that does is that allows for the students to see a calendar view of all of their assignments and what days, ideally based on their start date and their end date, when they should have those assignments turned in.

It's just more of a global look for them versus a daily look. They can see each day and they can see each week, and they know if they didn't get those assignments done by that day, it certainly doesn't mean that they're behind in the sense that they can't get to the finish line. It just means that okay, I know if I didn't do this...
this day, it rolls over onto the next day. It's just going to be another really great way for kids to self-pace and understand what they should be getting done on a daily, weekly, monthly semester basis. So we're very excited about that additional piece that will be launched.

MS. MILLER: And one other thing that I would like to add is that within the system, students can run reports. Daily, weekly progress reports that break down all of the assignments in that course. Those tasks that they've attempted, those they haven't, how many times they've attempted the task, how much time they've spent on the task. We use those reports, especially when we're meeting with parents, if there are concerns about their pacing, having the conversation of whether they've spent either too much time, what's happening around that, or too little time.

Those are great tools as part of the platform that both students and their parents, their learning coaches have access to on a daily
basis.

MR. LOBDELL: This is Scott Lobdell again. Just also a quick add to that. This is available to them 24/7. If you have a student who's a night owl and wants to get some work done at 1:00 in the morning, they can go in and do that, and their progress is always there. But the same thing for the parents, 24/7 access. Parents have their own login. They can actually view it on any piece of hardware that actually gets internet access.

We want parents and we want students to always have that ability. Are the teachers available 24/7? No, but they are available throughout the day and even into the evenings, because teachers will actually have their own office hours and work with the students on that communication. But we also provide, beyond that, on-demand help for them. On-demand help is Monday through Friday, and if their regular teacher is not available, they can actually click onto a Zoom link and they are in a session with
an area expert that can help them with whatever
group they need help with right now.

MR. CHERRY: I might also add, too,
that because they're a Friendship student, they
also participate in the administration our NWEA
math assessments, as well as the SRI at the high
school. Students are able to kind of monitor
their progress or completion towards their
benchmark utilizing the math, as well. We were
fairly intentional about that design when thought
about that, and we thought about what the high
school would look like.

We worked with our families to think
about that design. We knew that there would be a
day that we knew that the students or would want,
I shouldn't say need, but want academic support.
But we also knew that we needed to focus another
day around like an advisory for those students.
Just like our high school students at collegiate
and also tech prep participate in advisory, our
online students also have advisory.

Currently, prior to the pandemic,
those were on Thursdays. That was another
opportunity for our instructors, Lauren, who's
the high school administrator for the academy, to
sit with kids and work with kids and review their
data and review their information to make sure
that they were academically moving forward.

CHAIR CRUZ: Any other questions? I
just one have last final question then. If we
approve this, we'll be voting on this in July,
and this, as I understand it, will take effect
starting with the new school year. How do you
anticipate getting families and students
knowledgeable about what this means for them in
the next several months as they start back up in
the new school year?

MS. MILLER: I'll start. If approved,
we will be screaming from the rafters. No, we
will send out a communication to our parents via
email. We also will have like an opening kickoff
session before the start of school, because we
have to meet with students to plan their
schedules for the upcoming year. There will be a
broad announcement, and then there will be
individual meetings that we will have with
students as we work to devise their schedules.

We will look at all available data,
talk to students about the graduation
requirements that they have to meet, and then
those courses of interest that they may have.

MR. CHERRY: I will add on to that, so
when approved, as part of our ongoing
communications with families and constantly
seeking feedback, especially during this time,
Friendship right now is in the process of a lot
of strategic planning. One of the things that we
do throughout the week is we also have
communications specifically around learning
without limits.

This would allow us to communicate
that process. It would allow us, during our town
hall meetings with schools and with families, to
communicate it via that process. I'm quite sure
that Dr. Jones will have that as part of her
orientation with students, particularly around
those students who might be interested in Singleton classes.

But know that it'll be baked into our ongoing communication as we're constantly seeking feedback from our stakeholders over the summer as we plan for reopening Friendship. So know that it'll be part of that process.

DR. JONES: Hi, this is Peggy Jones. I'll just add on to Mr. Cherry. One thing that we've done very well since transitioning to virtual learning is our communication. We've been having online town halls with our parents and our scholars, and they've been well attended, even more attended than some of the events that we've had at the school.

This would be something that we would continue to communicate with our students and our families. We are sure if this is approved that our students, as well as many of our parents, will be really excited about having this opportunity.

MR. CHERRY: So Rick, just know that
we're constantly talking with our students and families as we gather the information on their preferred learning options for fall. Again, it'll be baked into those conversations as we work with families as they think about which options they prefer.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MR. CHERRY: You're welcome.

CHAIR CRUZ: Any other questions at this point? I appreciate you all coming out this evening and the Edmentum team. Again, this will be up for vote at next month's meeting.

MR. CHERRY: Thank you, everyone.

MS. MILLER: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Melody, I think you have one last item on the public hearing agenda.

MS. SAMPSON: Yes. This is a public hearing to discuss Kingsman Academy Public Charter School's request to offer competency-based learning units beginning in school year 2021 to its ninth through 12th-grade students. The school says adopting competency-based
learning units will create greater flexibility for its students, which will result in increased course completion, and by extension, increased graduation rates.

The school believes this will be especially beneficial for its overage, under-credited students who are not graduating at the same rate as their peers at other DC schools. According to the proposal, all of the high school's courses would be competency-based using Marzano resources, Personalized Competency-based Education, or PCBE framework.

The school has been using the PCBE framework since school year '16-'17, but because it has been implementing a competency-based framework in a Carnegie unit environment, the school has not been fully able to implement the framework in a way that maximizes student learning and success. Representatives from the school are available this evening to answer the Board's questions.

CHAIR CRUZ: Kingsman team, if you
want to introduce yourself, and if you have any opening remarks?

MS. HODGE: Sure. Good evening, DC PCSB Board and staff. My name is Shannon Hodge, and I am cofounder and Executive Director of Kingsman Academy Public Charter School. On behalf of the students, families, staff, board and partners of Kingsman Academy, I thank you for the opportunity to discuss our competency-based learning application with you this evening.

I am joined by several other members of the Kingsman Academy team and a couple of partners, who will introduce themselves in a few minutes. At the end of this month, I'll be transitioning from my role as Executive Director of Kingsman Academy. So if you'll indulge me a bit, I'd like to share my perspective on how we arrived at this application.

In the months and years that preceded Kingsman Academy's opening, the city dealt with serious questions about whether and how charter schools could serve students who are Kingsman
Academy's target population. Students who are overage and under-credited, students who have attendance and truancy issues, and students who have emotional and behavioral challenges.

I believed then and I believe now that both sectors should be evaluated in part on how we educate these specific students. When the Kingsman Academy founding team applied for a charter in 2014, we did so with the understanding that the road ahead of us would be difficult, but we had no idea what we were facing. We quickly realized that the school we planned on paper would not work for the students who walked into the building.

Our academic program, our physical space, our accountability goals and our staffing structure all felt innovative when we applied, but soon proved to be poor fits for our students. So as an entire school community, we set about redesigning the school to be what our students needed. Cofounder and Deputy Director, Kennesha Kelly, led this work. Over multiple years, she
redesigned the school from the ground up,
bringing in evidence-based research strategies
from inside and outside of education to rebuild
Kingsman Academy around the students we serve.

Redesigned learning spaces,
restorative practices, project-based learning,
customized technology platforms, Personalized
Competency-Based Education. These are all ideas
that she made come to life at Kingsman Academy to
better serve our students. One additional piece
of our puzzle will come together once we are able
to move to competency-based learning credits.

As explained in the application before
you, the traditional Carnegie Unit Time-Based
Credit Earning System assumes students learn at
the same pace, and can serve to punish those who
learn differently. As a result, it serves as a
barrier to credit earning and high school
completion for students most at risk of dropping
out, the very students we serve.

Six years ago, we could not have
proposed the Kingsman Academy that we now know we
need to be. The alternative accountability framework didn't exist. The alternative school's star framework didn't exist. Competency-based learning had not yet reached the District of Columbia. What Kingsman Academy is becoming is to me evidence of the innovation and opportunity that charter schools can provide to improve the learning of all students, especially those who have struggled the most to find success in school.

We as a city have a long way to go, but there are examples throughout the city of how nontraditional schools can and do serve all students well. I'm sure that you have questions about the application, and Deputy Director Kennesha Kelly is here to answer them, along with several of the partners she has worked with to redesign Kingsman Academy over the past few years.

Before I turn this over to Ms. Kelly for her opening remarks, I would like to conclude by thanking you for your consideration of this
application, and your willingness over the past few years to put in the work to understand what we, as a nontraditional school, are trying to do, and what you as an authorizer can do to help us better serve our students. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MS. KELLY: My name is Kennesha Kelly, cofounder and Deputy Director of Kingsman Academy Public Charter School. Our proposed competency-based academic program is an evidence-based alternative to a traditional Carnegie Unit Credit Earning System. In a Carnegie Based Credit Earning System, the goal is for all students to progress through course content on pace with their age and grade-level cohorts.

Because this system is time-based, students are expected to move through course content at a standardized pace, even if the student knows the material and is ready to move ahead, or if the student does not fully understand concepts and skills and needs additional time to learn the material. With our
proposed competency-based credit earning system, time is not the driving factor in where the students are in credits.

Instead, the focus is on whether a student has demonstrated proficiency on critical course concepts at each phase of post-secondary readiness, and is ready to move on to the next level. Students have multiple opportunities and ways to demonstrate proficiency. Students have voice and choice in teaching and the learning process. More importantly, the proposed academic program allows Kingsman Academy to create multiple pathways to graduation and post-secondary readiness, with real-time progress monitoring along the way.

While teachers can be creative and innovative in how to teach students and meet the needs of students within their framework, Kingsman Academy has direct access to a team of national experts, and partnership with Marzano Academies to make sure the school remains consistent in what is taught, how competency-
based units will be earned, and how students will
demonstrate competency in courses.

Transitioning away from a Carnegie
system will provide Kingsman Academy the
flexibility in the ways that a student can earn
credit, and allow students to work on skills,
content and knowledge at their current level at
individualized pace, regardless of their age,
academic history, prior academic performance or
disability status. The proposed charter
amendment will allow Kingsman Academy to
implement our academic model with fidelity and
better respond to the identified needs of our
target population.

We have with us today Doug Finn, our
Competency-Based Program Implementation
Specialist with Marzano Academies, Dr. Jody
Ernst, Vice-President of Research and Policy
Analytics with Momentum Strategy and Research,
and Steve Messner, our Board Chair for Kingsman
Academy. We are ready to answer any questions
you may have.
CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Thank you, everyone. I'm going to open up for questions in a second. I just wanted to start off by thanking the Kingsman team for all of its work over the last several years, and I know in many ways what you're asking us tonight is a culmination of that. I also wanted to recognize Ms. Hodge, your leadership at the school, and congratulate you on the new role at the DC Charter School Alliance.

So lots of change, but I also know this is a big moment for Kingsman.

MS. HODGE: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Board members, questions?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Hi. This is Jim Sandman. I want to echo Rick's thanks. I visited the school last December and was very impressed. I want to give a special shout-out to Shannon for all she's done in getting this school in such a wonderful position. I'm curious about your relationship with Marzano. Can you tell us more about your partnership, how you selected Marzano to be your partner in this venture?
MS. KELLY: Sure, I can talk about the selection process, and I'll have Doug Finn talk more about the work that he'll be providing to Kingsman. To Shannon's earlier point, we spent quite a bit of time trying to figure out how do we design an academic program to meet the needs of our students? We engaged in a pretty robust strategic planning process where we interviewed students, staff and families. We collected survey data, we analyzed historical academic data, and really talked to our students about what they needed in an academic program.

Once we had a good sense of what we needed, we spent quite a bit of time doing research to identify the best framework that we could use to implement our program. We reached out to Marzano Research just to engage them in our ideas, and that initial conversation really led us to realize that the alignment in terms of the values of Marzano Academies, and at the time, Marzano Resources, was in direct alignment to what we needed to provide to our students and our
families.

It was just the basic components that we were trying to solve for as a school. So how do we engage students who may not adhere to the traditional norms around school engagement? How do we make sure that we have a learning management system to track student progress along the way? How do we identify critical course content that students need in order to progress, and then within that, how do we make sure we have a system in place, not just for accountability, it would make sure our staff received the training that they needed.

There are a lot of frameworks that are out there around competency-based, but Marzano Research has been doing this work for years, and they've really laid the foundation for what it needs to look like if a school implements a competency-based model well. They really checked the boxes off in terms of what we were looking for.

Doug, do you want to add more to the
Marzano Academies and what you guys would be providing for us?

MR. FINN: The nature of the relationship started as a very entry-level support to go into. The amount that Kingsman Academy has taken the ideas and as you said, kind of that core understanding of what education is, and has really developed them into a wonderful merger between what our ultimate goal is for education and what Kingsman Academy's goal is for their students.

Dr. Marzano, he likes to joke in the later part of his career, he is bringing it all together, culminating all the research he's done over the 40-plus years, to bring it into a cohesive system instead of just fragments of research that's out there. Just talking with Kennesha over the past couple of weeks, moving towards this year coming forward, we're almost lock-step in our thinking of what needs to be done for our students.

So we're very confident and
comfortable with the relationship we have with them, and it feels almost like a friendship that we're working with. We're very encouraged to work with Kingsman throughout the upcoming years.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Thank you for all of this, and I also want to echo the gratitude expressed by my colleagues, Rick and Jim already, for you, Shannon. I wanted to ask, what have you learned from the PCBE implementation over the last few years that has informed how you plan to implement the use of this going forward if we approve it?

MS. KELLY: We've learned a lot. I think the first thing was to start slow. Slow and steady wins the race, but have very clear objectives in terms of benchmarks along the way. I think there are multiple ways that a school can jump into a competency-based program. We definitely took the more strategic approach by making sure that we were collaborating and communicating with our students and families.
The first thing we did after the research that we did internally, and then reaching out to Marzano Resources, was to adopt a standards-reference report card. That was really the first communication that we had with our families that we're headed in the right direction. What that did was it took away this pressure of a student trying to get an A, although they didn't know the content at the pace that they were expected to know it at.

For example, we were able to communicate to the students and say your proficiency scale, we're going to measure your content based on a zero to four scale, not a A, B, C, D or F scale. It made our students motivated and inspired not to give up when they encountered course content that they didn't know. Once we heard students talk about the scale in the sense that I have a two, what does it take for me to get a three?

What do I need to know? What do I need to learn? I didn't do a good job the first
time, but I'm practicing and I want to get better. We knew we were on the right track. The fact that we could put that scale on a report card meant that we had a tool to communicate to our families about the direction that we were headed in with the school.

The fact that we were able to gradually introduce this to our school community meant that we were able to learn a new learning management system so that we could personalize course content for students. We had to teach our teachers how to use the system, but we also had to teach our students, and we took our time in order to get to that space. The other component that was extremely important is that Doug came in when we started the relationship and the partnership to provide our teachers with professional development.

We're three years in at this point, and they're not hearing anything for the first time. They're ready to just implement fully with fidelity, but professional development was
definitely a barrier in the beginning. We were not expecting them to learn everything in one year, but over time they've been able to learn the framework, learn the model, practice the model, and then help their peers and support their peers when new staff came on board.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Thank you. That's helpful and makes sense.

MEMBER GANJAM: I wanted to ask just a little bit about how Kingsman has been experiencing and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and just looking ahead, if you go forward with a competency-based learning program, what type of adjustments might you expect if the school should need to be remote or partially remote in the fall?

MS. KELLY: Sure, I'll start and then I'll let Shannon chime in. When we knew that we had to prepare for COVID-19, we really focused on five primary areas to implement our distance learning plan. The first was individualized academic engagement. We knew we had a learning
framework that was designed to support our students any time, anywhere, and that that content was already personalized for their needs, regardless of their disability status or how many grade levels they were behind.

They were able to access content that fit them, and the instructional resources were aligned to their needs, as well. We also designed a master schedule that was aligned to our multi-tier system of support systems, so students were grouped into cohorts through distance learning so that teaching teams and support staff could push in to support students as they were learning or receiving live instruction, but also support them if they needed one-on-one support.

The second area was targeted interventions and supports. Part of our students require intensive behavior intervention, so we assigned behavioral support staff, so intervention specialists, behavior interventionists to engage with a very small
group of students so that everyone in the building had someone that they could go to. But we also didn't want to put such a burden on our staff that they were not able to respond to the needs and navigate their own COVID-19 challenges.

We had morning check-in community meetings with students, check-in small group instruction. Doug was making sure that our students with IEPs and special needs had their specifically-designed instructional plans and programs in place. We coordinated student support services, so every single student had a Chromebook and a hotspot. We knew that that would be important. Then we made sure that our students had food each week.

Then the last piece was how do we support our students and our families with technology and access to technology? So we held virtual office hours. Students were trained to provide peer-to-peer support for our management systems. The one thing I think we were most excited about is that our PBIS system has been
customized for Kingsman and is also an anytime/anywhere PBIS system that's individualized for students.

We were able to keep them motivated as they hit certain benchmarks along the way.

Shannon, do you have anything to add to that?

MS. HODGE: Just a couple of things. I think that the main thing for us was, for us what we called virtual school didn't really feel too different from our regular school programming. The systems that students were using, with the exception of the video conferencing software, were ones that they were already familiar with. So once we provided hotspots to all of the students with internet access and Chromebooks, we were able to roll out virtual school pretty seamlessly.

The other thing I think is also, for us, the reason it didn't feel different is because our general approach to how we're doing school with our students is to make sure their needs are met before we jump into the learning.
So in some places you'll see that it's Maslow before Bloom. I think that's certainly true for our students. I often tell people that for our students the first question they get asked in the morning can't be did you do your math homework?

It may need to be did you eat last night? Did you have a place to sleep? Do you need a shower? For many of our students, those same kind of stressors happened with COVID-19, and so for us it felt par for the course for us to check on their needs first before we jumped into the learning. That certainly helped with the virtual school. I'll let Kennesha talk about what would need to change for next year if we are partially or fully virtual next year.

MS. KELLY: I think the biggest challenge we had and what we'll have to improve on for next year is that for students who required intensive behavioral interventions, they were less likely to initial engage in distance learning to the point that Shannon just talked about. The way our school is designed, we have
what we call priority areas, and they're areas beyond academics where we have to make sure those needs are met first before we get to some of the more traditional school academic priority areas.

Those areas are behavior support services, health and wellness in light of COVID-19, and student engagement and then academic. Once we identify a student's priority area, we implement evidence-based practices to make sure that we're responding to their needs, but we're doing it in a way that is helpful and that's sustainable over time. I think as we think about the upcoming school year, we know that quite a few of our students are already behind in credits, so they're going to require credit recovery.

We know that our middle school students, in particular, are ready to get inside the building and socialize. What we're doing right now is reaching out to our individual students and families to learn about what their needs are and make sure that our plan for the
upcoming school year aligns to their needs, but also to the public health guidelines.

MEMBER GANJAM: Thank you for your intense student support and focus. Just one other question. Do you have a sense of what percentage of your students were engaged from March through June?

MS. KELLY: If we look across each priority area, I think we have about 10 students in our daytime program who were disengaged. Once we tried to dig into that information a little bit more, most of those issues were related to just life circumstances, what we just call public and social determinants of health. They had to focus on those areas of life, and academics wasn't the priority.

The great thing about a competency-based framework is that we start with that student wherever they left off. It's not like they missed content that they're falling behind. If they're disengaged, we are right here waiting for them and ready to move them along in their
content once we get them back engaged in school.

We have an amazing support team at Kingsman Academy. We have a community-based social worker.

We have intervention support staff who are really on the ground making sure that our kids have what they need, it just may not be academics. I think that's the one lesson we definitely learned with COVID-19, but it was also the one thing that we've been trying to solve since we've been open.

MEMBER GANJAM: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Any other questions from members? Mr. Messner, since you are on the line tonight, I'd be remiss not to ask what the process is in place to find a new head of Kingsman Academy?

MR. MESSNER: We the board, at the last board meeting, chose to select Ms. Kelly as our next ED. She's well qualified, experienced. She's perfect for the role.

CHAIR CRUZ: Excellent. I was not
expecting such a quick answer. Congratulations, Kennesha.

             MS. KELLY: Thank you.
             CHAIR CRUZ: You have lots of hands waving.
             MS. KELLY: Thank you.
             CHAIR CRUZ: Any other questions at this time? Otherwise, we will be coming back to vote on this in July. Thank you, Kingsman team. Thank you, Marzano team.
             MR. MESSNER: Thank you.
             MS. KELLY: Thank you.
             MS. HODGE: Thanks.
             CHAIR CRUZ: Public hearing is over.

We're actually going to start the meeting now. As usual, I need a motion to approve the agenda and then I am going to do a roll call vote.

             MEMBER SHELTON: I move to approve the June 22, 2020 board meeting agenda.
             MEMBER SANDMAN: Second.
             CHAIR CRUZ: We've got a motion and a second. Let me get a roll call vote. Ricarda
MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: James Sandman?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda?

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Steve Bumbaugh?

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey?

MEMBER CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: And Rick Cruz is an aye.

The motion passes to prove the agenda. Our discussion item this evening, and Scott, I believe you're presenting it, is our Financial Analysis Report for FY2019.

MR. PEARSON: Yes, thank you, Rick. I am very pleased to present our Financial Analysis Review, or FAR, for FY2019. I'll just make a brief introduction, and then if people have any questions I'd be happy to answer them.
We have been releasing the FAR since 2012, and at a time when there are widespread calls for maximum transparency, the FAR provides an extraordinary collection of financial information about each of DC's public charter schools.

I am not aware of any jurisdiction in the country that provides more financial information about its schools than we do here in Washington. The purpose of the FAR is to summarize and expand on the annual financial audit that each charter school undergoes every year. So a charter school, like any company and like any non-profit organization, goes through an audit by a certified financial accountant.

The audits for the school year that ended in June of 2019 were completed by all the schools by November of 2019 and then submitted to PCSB. As soon as we receive the audits, we release them to the public, so those are available on our web page. Then we started work on the FAR report, which we're releasing tonight. I'd like to take a few minutes to describe what
information the FAR contains.

First of all, on Pages 5 through 8 are
data tables that add up all of the financial
results of all of the public charter schools and
present them as a single set of hypothetical
financial statements for the whole sector. You
can see what was the total revenues for the
entire charter sector, for example, or the total
expenditures. This allows us to see some
interesting patterns. For example, you can see
that overall, public charter schools received
$143 million of facilities funding, but you can
also see that they spent a total of $167 million
on occupancy expenses.

The tables that follow on Pages 9
through 22 provide key information for each
school, allowing for easy comparison across all
charter schools. For example, on Pages 19 and
20, we show how much philanthropic revenue each
charter school has received, both overall and per
pupil over the last three years. By looking over
those tables on Pages 19 and 20, you can see that
some schools received no philanthropic revenue at all, and others received millions of dollars, many tens of thousands of dollars per pupil.

Beginning on Page 29 are the individual reports on each charter LEA, and each report is two pages long. The first page shows how the school does along key metrics of financial health. We show this visually so you can see if the school is in the green zone or the red zone. We compare it with how the school did the year before and how they do relative to the charter average. You can see at a glance the financial health of the school.

The second page of the report provides key financial information like total revenues and total expenses. It also shows how the school's expenses break down by category and how those compare with the charter average. You can see if a school spends more than average on occupancy or less than average on personnel expenses. Then it also contains notes. If our analysis of the school's financials reveals something we think is
important, we discuss that in the notes about the school.

When a school works with a management company, we also include a third page on the report where we describe the amount of money that the school pays for the management fee, and we also provide other key information about the management company, such as the top salary of the head of the management company. Overall, through the history of the FAR, we have seen the overall financial health of the charter sector improve. This is not an abstract thing, because when a disruption happens like COVID, we can have confidence that our schools have the resources to meet student needs, whether that means buying thousands of devices or hotspots for their students, or being able to face enrollment uncertainties without being worried about their financial stability.

I'll just close by saying that the FAR report is just one of many releases that we make every year around school financials. This
includes schools' budgets, their annual tax
returns, information on teachers' salaries, and
data on every procurement the school makes that
exceeds $25,000.00. I would add that in the last
year, we have made that procurement database
searchable, so you can go on and search for any
particular vendor or look at all the procurements
that a school has made over the years and see
that.

We're very proud of the transparency
that we've brought to charter school financials,
and we encourage the public to scrutinize this
report. Thank you very much.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thanks, Scott. Board
members, any comments or questions with regard to
the FAR report?

MEMBER SANDMAN: This is Jim Sandman.
Thank you for the report, Scott, and especially
for your summary. You said that over time, the
financial health of the sector has improved. I'm
curious how this report relates to similar
reports over the last few years. This found that
73 percent of total LEAs meet or exceed the standards on the six key indicators. What has that figure been in recent years? What is the trend line over the past few years?

MR. PEARSON: The trend line over the last few years has been that a higher and higher percentage have met financial indicators. It's not a perfectly smooth trend line, because over the years we have raised the bar of what it takes to meet that. For example, we used to say that having 30 days of cash on hand was acceptable. Now we say that's 45 days. It's also important that this is just a first step at a snapshot.

For example, you may see a school that didn't meet one of the indicators, meaning, for example, maybe they spent more money last year than they took in as revenue. Well, if a school has a lot of money saved and it has a plan for why it's spending more money that year, perhaps they're investing in new curriculum or they're investing in new computers or things like that, that may not be a bad thing. It's a flag for us
to look at and see whether it indicates that there's a problem.

But just because a school doesn't meet one or more indicators doesn't necessarily mean that they are operating in a financially irresponsible or poor way. Certainly if a school has missed six or five or maybe even four, we might be really concerned. But any school that's missed more than one, we look at. Only a few of the schools were schools where we really needed to take a close look, and in those cases we work very closely with the school to make sure that they are on a path to becoming financially stronger.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you.

MEMBER GANJAM: Scott, just a follow-up on that. Looking toward the future with the impact of COVID-19, do you have any thoughts on how this might impact schools' finances going into next year?

MR. PEARSON: Yes, I have a few. First of all, the good news is that what we were all
fearing, which was that the large shortfall in revenue that the city is facing because of a decline in sales taxes and hotel taxes and things like that, we were all afraid that that would translate into large reductions in per pupil funding by the city. That didn't come to pass.

We were overjoyed that the mayor was really able to pull a rabbit out of the hat, and through a combination of rainy day funds and federal financing, and just really tight financial management in a lot of other areas, like controlling travel expenses across the city, she was able to find sufficient revenues that, in fact, the per pupil funding for schools is actually going to go up next year by three percent.

In addition to that, there was in the CARES Act, the federal act that appropriated over $3 trillion for Coronavirus relief, there was specific funding for Title I schools, and most of our schools are Title I schools. They will be receiving over $20 million of extra funding.
through that. I think on the whole, the schools should be in good shape. The big unknown really is enrollment.

Charter schools are citywide schools, and a significant percentage of schools take public transportation to get to school. What we don't know is whether large numbers of families may elect to not continue at their charter school and maybe go to their neighborhood school where they're able to walk, for example. It's possible that schools, if that comes to pass and we really don't know, could face big drops in enrollment.

That would be precisely the kind of thing that a school that had a healthy balance sheet and strong financials could get through. Yes, their assets would go down. They'd spend some of their cash. They might have to borrow against their assets, but they could weather that storm. I want to emphasize, we don't know what's going to happen with enrollment. We will learn more over the summer.

We're getting some reports in the next
from My School DC about how enrollment looks, and
we'll be hearing from schools. I haven't heard
anything yet that indicates a calamitous outcome,
but I think it's still too early to tell because
we don't really know the full path of this
pandemic.

MEMBER GANJAM: Thank you, Scott.

MR. PEARSON: Sure.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Scott, I believe I
know the answer to this question, but the FAR,
the Financial Analysis Report, is based on data
that is already publicly available, all of the
sources are publicly available on our website, on
the schools' websites?

MR. PEARSON: Yes. It's based on data
that is available on our website. If you go to
our transparency hub and go to the financial
section, you can see the financial audit that the
school had done. This is the audit for the
fiscal year that ended June 30, 2019. We do some
calculations, so we'll present, for example, days
of cash that the school has. That's not
something that you might find written in their audit. You can calculate it using the data that the school provides, but in the FAR we try to provide a little extra analysis so that the public can see at a glance how financially healthy the school is.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Board members, any other questions or comments on the financial analysis report?

MEMBER CRUSEY: Just gratitude for this. This has been an important tool. I think it sets an example for authorizers elsewhere and other public sector bodies. It's useful for schools individually, for researchers, for us as we make decisions. This is just one of many examples of what you've contributed to the sector.

MR. PEARSON: Thank you.

MEMBER SHELTON: Just a quick question in terms of the schools where they did not meet the expectation or the measures outlined. For
that 27 percent of the schools, do we have any cause for concern? What are we doing in terms of working with those schools? Do we anticipate COVID having more adverse effects on their financial standing?

MR. PEARSON: Great question. I have a list of all of the schools in front of me. I would say at this point there is not a single school that I have significant concerns about. A couple of the schools that were on that list are schools that closed at the end of 2019, schools like City Arts and Ideal and Democracy Prep. There are a few schools that had some weak financials, but have worked very hard over the last year to strengthen their financials, and we've seen that because the schools' interim data.

A couple of the schools were brand-new schools, and often when a school starts they don't have any accumulated reserves. We've seen the work that they've done to build their reserves over the last year, and also to attract
philanthropy. A couple of years ago when Cesar Chavez Public Charter School was before us, we knew that they had a long-term financial challenge. They have a lot of cash, they're losing money every year, and their challenge is to get their enrollment up and essentially recapitalize their loan at a lower interest rate before they run out of cash.

They still have a couple more years, so we're tracking that. They're confident that they will be able to do that, so that's something that's on the horizon that we're a little concerned about. One of the schools that came up on some of the lists was Latin America Montessori Bilingual. They had a big loan that was coming due. Since then, they have refinanced that loan. They've sold their school building on Missouri Avenue, and they're consolidating over at the Kingsbury Building.

There's another school that has missed a couple of them, and that's Rocketship. That's because they have a big debt, but the debt is to
Big Rocketship, and Big Rocketship has made it
clear that the school isn't expected to pay that
back until they have the capability of doing so.
So it's different than having debt to a bank or
something like that. At this point, a school
that's not on the list for anything, but that I
have some concerns about depending on the path of
COVID is Monument Academy.

Monument depends on, and Seed, for
that matter. Those schools depend on boarding-
level revenues per pupil. Per-pupil revenues at
the level of $40,000.00 or more, and if for some
reason they were unable to run a boarding
program, that could be quite serious for them.
At this point, it doesn't look like that's going
to be an issue, but we're still in June and we
don't know how the pandemic is going to progress.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thanks for that,
Scott.

CHAIR CRUZ: If there aren't any other
questions on that, I'm going to turn to our
Consent Calendar. Melodi, I believe you had one
update you wanted to bring our attention to
before we vote on the Consent Calendar, is that
correct?

    MS. SAMPSON: Yes, thank you. During
our June public meeting, we incorrectly reported
that the Children's Guild Public Charter School
proposed removing a student Gallup poll goals.
The school did not actually request removing
these goals, and we have since corrected the
proposal and the charter agreement and they meant
to retain the Gallup poll goals. So tonight
we'll be asking you to approve the goals in the
corrected amendment.

    CHAIR CRUZ: And that has been
corrected on the public record and the materials
for tonight's meeting?

    MS. SAMPSON: Correct.

    CHAIR CRUZ: Excellent. Thank you,
Melodi.

    MS. SAMPSON: Thank you.

    CHAIR CRUZ: Consent Calendar, would
any member of the board like to remove an item
from the calendar for further discussion or state a recusal on any item in the record?

MEMBER CRUSEY: I would like to recuse myself from the item that includes YouthBuild.

CHAIR CRUZ: I'm going to pull you out of YouthBuild. I'm going to take that out of the Consent Calendar.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Hi Rick. I think take me out of the one for Inspired Teaching.

CHAIR CRUZ: YouthBuild and Inspired Teaching are removed from the Consent Calendar. We'll do separate votes on those. For the Consent Calendar minus YouthBuild and Inspired Teaching, can I get a motion to approve?

MEMBER SANDMAN: I move to approve all items on the Consent Calendar except for the two that will be handled separately.

MEMBER GANJAM: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: A motion and a second. I will do a roll call vote again. Jim Sandman?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?
MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda?

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Steve Bumbaugh?

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey?

MEMBER CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam?

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: And this is Rick Cruz, aye. So the motion passes for the Consent Calendar. Then we have two items that we pulled, the YouthBuild. Let's get this right.

YouthBuild Charter Renewal Agreement. Can I get a motion to approve the charter renewal agreement for YouthBuild DC PCS?

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: I move to approve the charter amendment agreement for YouthBuild Public Charter School.

CHAIR CRUZ: Got a motion, can I get a second?

MEMBER GANJAM: Second.
MEMBER SHELTON: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: And then I'll do a roll call, as well. Jim Sandman?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda?

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Steve Bumbaugh?

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam?

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey is recused, and Mr. Cruz is an aye, so that motion passes.

Then can I get a motion on the charter amendment for Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS, PMF as goals update?

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to approve Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS update of the PMF as goals?

CHAIR CRUZ: Charter amendment?

MEMBER SHELTON: Amendment, yes,
charter amendment, sorry.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: I have a motion and a second. I'll do a roll call vote. Jim Sandman?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda is recused.

Steve Bumbaugh?

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey?

MEMBER CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam?

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Rick Cruz is an aye, and that motion passes, as well. Any new business? Are you sure? If there isn't, I will take a motion to adjourn this evening's meeting.

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to adjourn the June 22, 2020 board meeting.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: Motion and a second.
Roll call vote. Ricarda Ganjam?

    MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

    CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey?

    MEMBER CRUSEY: Aye.

    CHAIR CRUZ: Steve Bumbaugh?

    MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Aye.

    CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda?

    VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Aye.

    CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?

    MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

    CHAIR CRUZ: Jim Sandman?

    MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

    CHAIR CRUZ: And Rick Cruz with an

    aye. We are adjourned.

    (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter

    went off the record at 8:47 p.m.)
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Public Hearing and Public Meeting

Before: DCPCSB

Date: 06-22-20

Place: teleconference

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

______________________________
Neal R. Gross
Court Reporter