D.C. PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

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BOARD MEETING
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PUBLIC HEARING
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MONDAY
JULY 19, 2021
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The D.C. Public Charter School Board met via Videoconference, at 6:30 p.m. EST, Rick Cruz, Chair, presiding.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

RICK CRUZ, Chair
LEA CRUSEY, Vice Chair
RICARDA GANJAM
JIM SANDMAN
NAOMI SHELTON

STAFF PRESENT

MICHELLE WALKER-DAVIS, Executive Director, DC PCSB
MELODI SAMPSON, DC PCSB
NADA MOUSA, DC PCSB
ERIN KUPFERBERG, DC PCSB
BRIANI BOYD, DC PCSB
ALSO PRESENT

JAMIE MILES, AppleTree Early Learning PCS
CHAVAUGHN BROWN, AppleTree Early Learning PCS
KATHRYN PROCOPE, Howard University PCS
CORBET HOUSTON, Howard University PCS
SUSAN SCHAEFFLER, KIPP DC PACS
DANE ANDERSON, KIPP DC PCS
CAITLIN MAXWELL, KIPP DC PCS
JACQUE PATTERSON, KIPP DC PCS
SUSAN TOTH, KIPP DC PCS
CLARISSE MENDOZA-DAVIS, Maya Angelou PCS
AZALIA SPEIGHT, Maya Angelou PCS
MASHEA ASHTON, Digital Pioneers Academy PCS
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CHAIR CRUZ: [presiding] Saba Bireda is not able to join us tonight, but has and will vote by proxy.

So, this evening, as we move through each agenda item, Briani, our moderator for the evening, will unmute staff or individuals speaking on behalf of the school.

We've disabled the hand-raising feature, but individuals who previously signed up to testify will be called upon. And as a reminder, all written public comment is available to the public on our website. And if you didn't sign up in advance by sending your name to the public comment mailbox before this meeting, please submit any and all comments to public.comment@dcpcsbo.org. Alternatively, you may use our public comment line to leave a voicemail testimony. That number is 202-328-2660 and selecting option No. 2.

This is the time when we usually open
up, as always, open up to public witnesses who are signed up. This evening we have no one signed up to testify. So, if anyone does wish to offer comments, please make use of either the public comment line or public.comment@dcpcsb.org.

All right. With that, we have a number of items that are being presented in our public hearing section "Charter Amendments". And before inviting Melodi Sampson to kick us off, I would like to cede the floor to Dr. Walker-Davis, our Executive Director, who wants to provide some context for several of the Charter amendments.

DR. WALKER-DAVIS: Thank you, Chairman Cruz.

Before my staff introduces the amendments, I would like to share our intent and position on virtual programming for the 2021-to-2022 school year.

The last year, as you know, has taught us many lessons and presented unique situations that we were working through in real time. We seek to continue to apply these lessons, as
school leaders prepare to fully reopen starting next month.

One lesson that was perhaps the most poignant was the need both for consistency in terms of our overall expectations as well as differentiation or flexibility to meet the specific needs of our communities. And this proved true not only in our urgent and real-time response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also as we look to reimagine our overall approach to education.

So, to that end, for your consideration tonight is the opportunity for some schools to amend their charters to offer substantive permanent virtual programming. To be clear, our goal is for every school to return to in-person learning as the primary mode of instruction, and we also want to be responsive to the questions and concerns that we've heard from families and schools that have inquired about continued virtual programming for a discrete subset of their populations.
As you know, some charter LEAs are already authorized under their charter agreements to offer virtual programming, including schools that operate a separate online campus, schools that operate a virtual program within a non-virtual school, and three, schools that have been granted a competency-based waiver that allows for virtual programming. Adult education schools might also offer virtual programming without a charter amendment.

Specifically, for the items before you tonight, we opened a charter amendment process only for schools wishing to offer substantive permanent virtual programming separate and apart from their response to the pandemic. And it would all under categories similar to what I've already mentioned.

Further, if you were to approve any of the schools under consideration, you may also require those LEAs to track and report separately the outcomes for the students participating in permanent virtual programming, so that the
efficacy of the program can be monitored.

So, tonight, you will hear directly from schools that wish to offer, again, substantive permanent virtual programming separate and apart from any response to the pandemic in the fall. And as you know, we will have a special meeting next week, Monday, July 26th, for you, as a Board, to vote on these requests.

So, with that being said, I'd like to turn it over to Melodi Sampson to introduce the first request.

   Melodi?

MS. SAMPSON: Hi. My name is Melodi Sampson. I am a School Performance Department Senior Manager.

Tonight, the Board will hear from AppleTree Early Childhood Public Charter School regarding its request to permanently offer virtual programming for a subset of its students.

Starting in school year '21-22, AppleTree Public Charter School proposes
offerings its Every Child Ready curriculum in a virtual environment for up to 20 pre-K-3 and pre-K-4 students.

The students will engage in synchronous lessons for 30 to 60 minutes per day. They will also have asynchronous learning opportunities. Each student must have a caregiver who facilitates the child's learning.

AppleTree Public Charter School believes offering a virtual program will improve its ability to reach children whose families are reluctant to enroll their youngsters in school.

Representatives from the school are here to answer any questions you have about their request.

CHAIR CRUZ: Great. Thank you, Melodi.

Make sure we have everyone from AppleTree. Briani, if you can make sure that we have the AppleTree team?

AppleTree Team, if you would introduce yourselves, and if you have any opening remarks,
before we open to questions from the Board?

MS. BOYD: Yes, we have Chavaughn Brown and Jamie Miles.

MS. MILES: Yes, I had to take my virtual background off. I had a bit spot in the middle of my face.

Good evening, everyone. Thank you so much for allowing us to be here.

I am Jamie Miles. I am the Executive Director and Chief of Schools for AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School, and I am joined this evening by AppleTree's Chief of Research and Innovation, Ms. Chavaughn Brown.

We are very delighted to be with you this evening to seek your approval to amend our charter to offer a virtual program for the start of the '21-22 school year.

As you know, because we've been before you a few times now, AppleTree has been around for many years. We started in 2001 in Southwest D.C. and we've grown and educated thousands of students and really prepared them to thrive in
This past school year, we all know was very unprecedented for many of us. In March 2020, we found ourselves quickly having to pivot and take our traditional education approach and launch it virtually to accommodate the needs of our students, teachers, and families. By far, I must admit, it was some of the hardest moments of our educational careers, making us sometimes even wonder if this was even possible. However, with time, we discovered it was not only possible, but it was also very insightful, and we have some new learnings as a result of it.

Prior to the pandemic, we have always sort of tracked data to see what early childhood students were doing. Are they in school? Are they not in school? In 2019, 28 percent of 3-year-olds and 14 percent of 4-year-olds did not attend the District's pre-kindergarten programs. Some of these, of course, we know, probably were attending private schools. However, AppleTree believed that many of those families who were not
attending, they kept their students out of school simply because they believed their children were better served at home or were unwilling to have their children leave from home for a significant amount of time.

We saw this during our recruitment efforts. When we would speak to families, they would say that they felt their student was too young to attend real school. So, they wanted to keep their student at home; their child wasn't ready.

We also saw it even after we enrolled families. We will have families to come, and most of the students actually did pretty fine, but their moms or their dads or caretakers would cry, and it was very hard for them to separate from the young learner. And as a result, they would withdraw their student from the school. And then, we continue to see this trend now during the pandemic, as some parents are just hesitant to send their students to school for safety reasons.
AppleTree, as you know, is non-compulsory. We only serve those grades. And we believe that there will continue to be a percentage of parents and caregivers who, as they did pre-pandemic, choose not to send their children to school.

We've thought about this a lot and how can we reach these children, and how can we persuade parents and caregivers to send them to school with us. But, prior to the pandemic, we did not have much success.

However, the pandemic did provide us with a possible answer. And what we did, we modified our Every Child Ready instruction model to serve our virtual students and allow us to deliver a quality in-home education during this period of time.

And during this time, what we learned was that, when families were engaged and teachers used the lessons outlined for them, our students made progress across all of our domains. That's our social-emotional learning, math, language
If approved, our virtual program, where we're only asking for 20 students or less at this time, they will be assigned to a teacher and a teaching assistant, and an implementation specialist, who will monitor the quality of the implementation of instruction.

Students in the virtual cohort will be required to have an adult who can serve as their co-teacher. We do emphasize that. That is very important, that there is an adult present to help facilitate learning at home and to serve as a co-teacher with our teachers who will be teaching virtually.

As a co-teacher, the adult will be responsible for working with the student at home to engage in the learning. Students in the virtual cohort will participate in whole group/small group instruction throughout the week. Assessments will be administered in person. Students with special needs will receive their services virtually or will have set dates.
for in-person services, if there is a need based
on their disability. Home meals, technologies,
and materials will be provided to the families.

Our mission is to educate 3- and 4-
year-old children, so that they are ready to
succeed in kindergarten. We believe we
effectively accomplish this mission for those who
already attend our schools in person. However,
it is our belief that we are not able to reach a
significant number of young students, simply for
the reasons I outlined earlier.

A virtual option such as this that we
are proposing would allow, we think, AppleTree to
educate these children. If this approach is
approved and successful, we can expand it and it
will further increase the likelihood of providing
all young children with a solid educational
background by the time they reach kindergarten.

So, at this time, I will pause. Thank
you again for this opportunity. And we are
available to answer any questions that you have
for us.
CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Miles.

All right. Board Members, who would like to kick off our questions/remarks?

MEMBER GANJAM: So, I'd love to ask a little bit more about the adults-at-home facilitator. I mean, thank you so much for describing the approach that you're taking at AppleTree. With this at-home facilitator, how many hours per day will this facilitator devote to facilitation? And how does the teacher support the facilitator in the study?

MS. MILES: So, one, I'll start with training, just making sure that our families or the adult who's with the child is very familiar with our program. We will take them through understanding about the child's day, what the day looks like, the expectations, from how to log in, how to log out; how to navigate any of the instructional programs that we'll be offering virtually; what's the expectation of when we are doing a particular activity; what their role in
that facilitation of the learning at home would look like. And we'll make sure that those individuals are trained and supported.

But our goal is to lead the instruction, but our students are young. So, therefore, it is important that an adult is there to, one, get them online. If they're not being as attentive as we would like for them to be, to re-engage them; to potentially hold up things that we may need to help with facilitating the lesson at home. If we're doing some hands-on STEM activities, making sure those materials are prepared there.

There are always questions that my teachers have that they can ask of the students. There's also questions that our families can ask of the student when they are at home as well.

The students would not be engaged in full hours of talking at a screen or talking to our teachers or working with a teacher. So, during that time, the adult at home would be asked to go through some of the learning
activities at home. It could be a nature walk. Again, our students are early childhood, so we really want them to use the environment in their home for learning. It could be practicing some number writing at home. It could be taking a picture or a snapshot of something that they can complete.

They could be engaged in play with the adults. We do believe in play at AppleTree. So, it can be having a conversation with your child through play and being able to -- or with the person you are watching; it may not be your child, with the adult with the student -- engaged in play with the student throughout. So, being able to share those opportunities back with us and engage with the student and with us through that process.

MEMBER GANJAM: So, what will be the hours of the school day?

MS. MILES: We will retain our typical school hours. We will go from 9:00 until 3:00. We will provide our students, our families, with
a schedule. In that schedule, there will be,
just like our traditional school day, everything
from a recommended nap time as well as for
lunchtime.

But, also, during that time, they will
have morning activities, which would be our
morning meeting. They will have a read-aloud
that they'll engage in. And then, throughout the
week, they will have the opportunity to have one-
on-one or small group lessons facilitated by
their teacher. That may include them or a few
peers in that lesson, as well as hands-on science
lessons and writing lessons, and other things.

MEMBER GANJAM: Okay. Great. And so,
how many hours per day --

MS. MILES: Oh, I'm sorry, the hours.

MEMBER GANJAM: -- yes, that the
caregiver might be involved?

MS. MILES: Approximately about three
hours. Chavaughn, is that a good estimate of
hours? Once we think about the timing, I think
it's about three hours --
MEMBER GANJAM: Thanks.

MS. MILES: -- out of a six-hour curriculum.

MEMBER GANJAM: Okay. Thank you.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Thank you for your presentation here.

And I was going to ask the question about where your estimates of demand and interest for this had come from, and you were able to speak to it. So, I appreciate that.

But I'm curious how you've engaged families and staff in developing this proposal as a solution from what you understand about children who haven't been enrolled in a school and families' reticence to have them enrolled in in-person living.

MS. MILES: So, starting, first, with our staff, I think it wasn't as much engaging them into this process as much as it was engaging them in the virtual experience in general -- what was working well; what wasn't working well; how can we improve upon what we were recommending in
the space; listening to our teachers to modify
our program accordingly, to make it more
accommodating to the families' needs, as well as
in somewhat listening to our families as well
during the pandemic time of like what wasn't
working. We need more small group time, or it
was very difficult for my student to get online
first thing for a few minutes, and then, get back
off; we prefer for them to stay online for a
longer amount of time.

So, we used their feedback to really
make the program more robust and more responsive
to the families, and more accommodating to the
teachers and what they were facilitating during
that time.

And in terms of engaging families,
just to sort of see their interests. It came
informally through conversations that families
were just having as they were enrolled in the
school year, asking the question: will you be
offering a virtual option?

And, of course, as Dr. Walker-Davis
named at the beginning of this, our goal is for every single student to be back in the building. We want our families back in the building. However, there was some hesitancy there for safety reasons.

It also came about as we were just out recruiting and talking to families. And this was, actually, pre-pandemic as well as during the pandemic, just naming that families, again, had interest. They were sort of working in pods. We realized there were pods before that families were working in, and then, during the pandemic, they created more pods. And they were interested in remaining with their pods, but they also wanted the opportunity to engage and learn and be provided with some guidance and instruction in their lessons and in their teaching at home with their students.

Then, the formal way of the surveying, asking our families and asking our teachers, one, is this an option? And do you think that this is something that we should invest in; is it worth
it? And we had about 63 percent of our staff members to say yes, and many had very successful and thought it is something we should continue to offer.

And then, with a very small subset of families -- again, that's why we're only looking for a small number of seats here -- who named that this would be something that they would be very interested in, if there was an opportunity presented to them.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thank you so much for all of your responses so far. This has been helpful to hear. But, again, for this to be early childhood, it is interesting to hear how this will all work.

And I just wanted to get more thoughts from you in terms of, contrary to what research has told us about the appropriate, you know, as far as age levels, how age-appropriate it is for children to be engaged in virtual learning. What data or what have you seen that codifies your decision to decide to go down this path?
MS. MILES: Yes, we have Chavaughn Brown, our Chief of Research, here who is going to share some data, some insights that we have seen and some new learnings that we discovered through this process.

MS. BROWN: Sure. I'm happy to share.

And really, just to kind of frame my response, I really do wish there was a different title for what we're proposing. Because the virtual learning I really think sells it a little bit short. We are really trying to engage families in a cohort of early learning who are choosing not to send their child to an in-person educational experience, but who still want to belong to a school and to have access to high quality early learning materials.

So, in no way would we say it's developmentally appropriate for a 3- and 4-year-old to engage in full-day virtual learning, like Jamie shared, from 9:00 to 3:00 p.m. That is not our goal. And if we found out that a family was approaching virtual learning in that way, we
would certainly coach them into different developmentally appropriate practice.

Our goal, as Jamie mentioned, is to really lift up the power of families, as their child's first teacher and leverage family expertise in helping to differentiate their child's learning experience in their 3- and 4-year-old years.

So, just as Every Child Ready celebrates the teacher perspective and adapts based on what teachers say they need, we hope to create a model and an environment where a family's voice is lifted and we're able to have an agile response and support families right where they are in terms of meeting the needs of the development of their child.

In terms of what this would look like over the course of the day, we found that across all four domains, if children experienced at least six or more virtual small group lessons, which are short -- I'm talking one-on-one or small groups lessons that are 10 minutes or less
they experienced growth across math, social-emotional learning, language and literacy domains. But we know that there's an untold story there of what families were doing with the children offline.

And so, our goal is to provide opportunities to extend learning, extend play, and as Dr. Michelle Walker-Davis mentioned at the very beginning, reimagine what this early learning experience could be, with kind of an innovative model where the publisher and the school provider is actually learning and bringing family voice to the center and not giving families something to implement. Families will have a voice in helping to shape what this early learning experience will be.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thank you for that.

MS. BROWN: Uh-hum.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim, did you have a question?

MEMBER SANDMAN: I did. Sorry, I was unmuting myself.
Can you describe what the day and the hours are like for in-person students?

MS. MILES: Yes. Our students arrive anywhere between -- we have before care, so they can arrive as soon as seven o'clock, but, basically, our school day begins at 8:45 with instruction. They will do -- they come in. They have a breakfast time with their teacher, and then, they go into whole group lesson, like a morning meeting. They will have some center time. During that center time, there will also be small group instruction happening in the mornings. They will continue to engage in their center time and have small group instruction mixed in with a little bit of whole group instruction.

Then, after that, they will break for lunch or recess, or recess and lunch. And then, they will go down for a nap for like an hour and a half to two hours, depending upon -- like an hour and a half, an hour and 45 minutes between preschool and pre-K.
And then, they come back up. They have a snack, as well as they'll engage again in some type of whole group instruction. And then, they will go back into centers. Where they are in center time is when they are engaged with learning with their peers, and their teacher may be in and out of that time, asking questions and engaging with them. Also, we have a teacher who will be working with them doing small group instruction during that time.

And then, they will exit at the end of the day.

MEMBER SANDMAN: And what time is that?

MS. MILES: 3:15.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Okay. My understanding from your proposal is that you'll have between half an hour and an hour of synchronous virtual learning. Asynchronous learning at home will not be tracked, is that right?

MS. MILES: In terms of it not being
tracked, it will be a part of the day in terms of they'll have assignments and things that we will ask for them to complete. For example, it could be where they're out walking with the family, collecting leaves, not the best example, but it could be an example of something that they would do. And then, maybe that is part of the assignment that they will submit to us. So, then, they would like take a picture and send that to us through that platform.

So, it will not be completely where we would not have any engagement with them and we will not track that. We would know what those students are doing. We will guide them through activities that they should complete during that time. It will not be for the duration of the six hours, but they will have activities and things that they will need to complete during that time when they're not with us.

MEMBER SANDMAN: You'll be receiving the same dollar amount, $11,000, for the students who are in-person for six hours a day as you will
for students who are getting half an hour to an
hour of synchronous virtual instruction, and
then, with asynchronous at-home instruction.
What assurance can you give us that the students
in the new program, that the investment of
$11,000 is going to be commensurate with what
they get out of it? Frankly, that just seems
like a mismatch to me.

MS. MILES: Great question. One, we
know we will make sure they have the resources
from helping them set up their home environment,
where, of course, we do that in the school
anyway. We provide a desk. We provide the
resources. We will do the same thing for our
students at home. We will work with them to make
sure that they have a learning space that's
conducive to their environment. We will also
ensure they have all the resources the materials
that they need from the technology to physical
iPad that they need to facilitate learning, in
addition to any internet access that they need to
ensure that they have connectivity all
throughout.

   As I mentioned, all learning materials, all of their manipulatives, all the things that, typically, are shared across the board, each student will have to have their own set of learning materials, their own set of books, things that we would typically have shared in the classroom, where we would only have to buy maybe one book for three or four students in the classroom because there's multiple students and we can rotate. This student would basically have their classroom set up for them within that learning environment, where we would not be sharing those resources in the same way that we will be sharing those resources with students who would be in person.

   So, learning materials, there are a lot of materials that have to be purchased for early childhood students to learn and engage -- from the blocks; the manipulatives; as I mentioned, the learning centers that we will ask them to engage; with the blocks that we will ask
students to build and create imaginary things and
tell us about those things; from our STEM
activities that our students would be
participating in, from buying the balance scale
to the balloons, or whatever they may need, using
those supplies; again, things that are typically
shared, and it would be at a lower cost. For the
smaller amount of students, there will be no
shared. We have to provide that for the cost
there.

As well as, of course, we have the
teacher who will be dedicated, their time and
their resources to continue to support the
student, as they would in person, in addition to
all of our social worker needs. Anything that
family needs we will likely -- sort of based on
what we're doing now, we deliver all meals to
families. We will probably continue to deliver
meals to families. They sign up for us. We will
make sure those meals get to them, so that they
do not have to come to us; and any other
resources that we need to provide to the family.
MS. BROWN: And respectfully, Jamie,
I would add that we're investing in families.
And just as we are educating teachers in best
practices in early education, we're investing in
building that pedagogy for families, so that they
will internalize and have an understanding of
developmentally appropriate practice and what it
means to educate and extend learning on specific
standards. And so, really building capacity in
our families is something that we take very
seriously and plan to reimagine this upcoming
school year.

MS. MILES: Yes, that was an area
where we definitely saw a need. Like we realized
families were in the home and they were working
with our students. So, we need to invest the
time and the resources to train them and support
them to help us facilitate.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you.
Will you have eligibility criteria for
participants in the virtual program or will it
simply be on request, as anyone who wants it gets
it?

MS. MILES: It's open to all.

However, you must have that adult who is present.
You must have the adult that is present who's willing to commit the time. Also, the understanding, as I named, the assessments, they have to be in person, being able to do that and take part in that.

You have to show up every day for all of our live sessions that we're doing, for the homework activities that we're doing that we expect in our families. We will have that laid out for them, so they will fully know what the expectation of them is, so that they have to meet those expectations.

And recognizing this is not a, "Oh, let me sign up for virtual learning and put my child on a computer or walk away and let them watch TV all day." This is not what we are offering. We are engaging the family. We are engaging the student. We are engaging the adult. We are expecting both of them to be closely
involved and engaged in this process. And if
they're not able to make that commitment and/or
if they're not able to continue with that
commitment, then we will offer them a seat to our
in-person instruction, in-person classrooms.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Thank you for
that.

My followup question to Jim's question
is around your -- and some of the other schools
we'll be speaking with later -- the eligibility
criteria really around the student. For this, it
really seems like the eligibility criteria around
the adults requires a lot of thought.

And is there clarity? First, do you
have confidence in what evidence of really
thoughtful -- and be surveying for parents or
caregivers to understand what the full range of
this commitment is, one, beyond anecdotal?

And then, two, is it a requirement
that it's one caregiver per child? I know there
was a reference to pods that can be formed. But,
from my own experience with a child who wasn't
three during the pandemic, but will be, the engagement, is it families that would have to be trading off from day to day? Because that kind of commitment, this is like a job. And realistically, how many families would really be able to commit one person to be, whether it's one child or it's multiple children, to have that kind of institutional knowledge for such a long period of time?

MS. MILES: Yes, definitely. One, we ask for an adult. So, that could be a mother and a father or a grandparent --

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Yes.

MS. MILES: -- whoever is in the household, or they may be switching, based on the needs, where it may not be one person who is consistent. But our goal is to, again, make sure that we invest in the family, so that all are familiar and able to facilitate and be a participant in their child's education, but also naming those who are in pods. We are perfectly fine if it's a small group with one adult who's
in charge of that small group to help facilitate that learning opportunity. So, that could be like one or two adults facilitating three to four students or multiple children and engage them in learning through this process.

MS. BROWN: Jamie, if I could also add, a part of the family engagement piece will also be ensuring that families understand the role of the conditions and the learning environment. So, a lot of our content has almost a Montessori-inspired framework, where children are provided with an environment to learn, such as high quality centers and teachers are trained how to facilitate those centers in a way that doesn't interrupt, but extends play.

And so, families will also be provided that pedagogy, where they can set up whatever room or environment their early learners are learning in, so that the child can also engage in play and be extended with facilitation, but not constantly -- I'm picturing my own 3-year-old here in my house where I'm constantly kind of
saying, "Okay, now do this." "Now let's do this." But this would be a piece that really extended the pedagogy and provided families with resources to extend learning through play in a really high quality way.

CHAIR CRUZ: So, Jim and Lea both asked the questions that were on my mind. But, just to go a little bit deeper here, the application speaks to an interest, both on the part of families, but also on the part of the school, the meeting a need that existed pre-pandemic. And if I could just ask, what was the thinking about a virtual option before the experience of the last 18 months?

MS. MILES: I will start, and then, I'll let Chavaughn also talk, as our curriculum developer and provider.

But, on the school side, it's interesting, you know, you think about the pandemic and it's like all gloom and terrible things, but, honestly, it was just one of those things where as, on the school side, it's really
setting up and approaching this saying: can we
do this? Is this possible? That was not at the
forefront, to be very honest with you. It was
more like, what else can we do?

And we've definitely explored options
that we've heard of the learning pods before.
So, being able to invite those pods in just to
have play dates or to learn more about what we
do, so they will feel more comfortable bringing
their child to school or giving them a little bit
of runway and putting the supports in place, so
that family who is really reluctant to bring
their child to school or really reluctant to have
their child remain at school, to really
understand what we do to make them feel more
comfortable.

But, honestly, going virtual was not
the very first thought in our minds initially.
However, Chavaughn, I would love for you to speak
through some of the thinking behind the
curriculum and where it's been.

MS. BROWN: Sure. So, as a model
provider, Every Child Ready has been approached several times over the last 10 years of my tenure at AppleTree with pods both in D.C. and out of D.C. asking if they could use these materials to support in-home learning. And at the time, it wasn't something that we had fully realized or had reimagined to provide to families.

And so, this last year, we were able to take our learnings and listen to teachers and families and reimagine the instructional model to be delivered in a virtual setting, so that families were provided with those high quality instructional materials.

I will say that we do have a really strong push towards authentic and naturalistic assessment and data collection. And this, we're still studying, which feels very different for a lot of people who are operating high quality schools in D.C. because they're used to a traditional performance management framework, where we're capturing skills and abilities.

So, something that pushed us this year
was a more authentic way to capture what children are learning from a standards-based framework and incorporating more observational reports. So, that's something, an innovation that we've been able to leverage over this last year of piloting this virtual instructional model.

CHAIR CRUZ: One follow-on question. The choice for families pre- and now post-pandemic -- hopefully, post-pandemic -- is not as simple as no sort of structured early childhood program or a structured in-person childhood program. There's a lot of sort of options in between.

How would you compare what you're proposing to offer virtually with the family engagement to the many other options that are available? Many of them are comparably free. So, other types of programs that families might take advantage of in the community.

MS. BROWN: Rick, are you referring to the free EdTech products?

CHAIR CRUZ: Not so much the EdTech
products, but libraries, community centers. Like
I'm just trying to --

MS. BROWN: Sure.

CHAIR CRUZ: You know, there's a broad
spectrum of programming that parents are more or
less comfortable with and prevent less of a stark
choice between no programming for students or the
in-person sort of programming that you all have
very capably offered for many years, and how you
would see this on that sort of spectrum.

MS. BROWN: Yes. Jamie, why don't I
pause to let you respond first, as Chief of
Schools, but I have thoughts?

MS. MILES: Well, actually, I was
going to toss it to you. But to say I will start
with one, just the adult and the teacher. Our
teachers are trained and they're supported
through this process from how to implement
monitoring of data, tracking data, to be able to
thoughtfully engage with our families and to
thoughtfully engage with our students.

There are many programs out there.
And as a mom of young learners, you can
definitely pick up a program and you can do a
program. But, even as an educator, I found
myself sometimes wondering or even saying, can
someone else do this for me versus me having to
do it? Or wondering, how can I do this?

So, one, just naming that you will
have the adult who is available and accessible
for you, just as if you were sitting in a real
classroom, to support you and help you navigate
through the resources that are there.

But, in addition to that, I'll let
Chavaughn continue.

MS. BROWN: I would say that families,
especially in D.C., are so fortunate to have the
choice to bundle or debundle what they want their
child's educational experience to be. So, in
this case, if a child were to or a family were to
engage in this virtual learning, co-taught/play
cohort, they could also layer on the virtual
options that places like the Smithsonian and
Martha's Table, and different places, have
layered on over this last year.

We can continue to offer some of those virtual experiences, but the difference is the family has, for lack of a better word, a roadmap of early learning that we've been able to validate and prove works time and time again in Washington, D.C., with our in-person learning at AppleTree. And so, families will have that early learning progression and roadmap, and the skills and the knowledge to be able to coach their child through those phases of development while also experiencing some of these virtual add-ons or in-person add-ons, if they feel comfortable taking their child to the Smithsonian or different engagements.

But the hope is that we can also have a dialog with families and learn what they want and what they're experiencing, and then, bring that back to the model and the early learning standards, to help paint a cohesive picture and early learning experience for their child.

CHAIR CRUZ: One last question. Given
that you're proposing, to borrow some of the
language that Dr. Walker-Davis used earlier, sort
of a substantive sort of permanent program, that
presupposes wanting to go from 20 to a larger
number over time, I believe. And what do you
think the broader market sort of interest, like
what's the families' sort of larger interests for
a program like this? Are we talking hundreds of
students that you might serve?

MS. MILES: I don't know if we're 100
percent there yet to say hundreds of students.
And I will say this through the informal data
collections. I mean, we definitely have the
formal data that we've collected from our
families who are currently with us. We've had
the informal connections that we've had with
these families out and about in these learning
pods, as well as we have asked the question, are
there other options? Or not even asked a
question; they just said, no, my child isn't
ready. We've never had the opportunity to be
able to offer them an alternative. We weren't
positioned to be able to offer them that alternative.

So, definitely a lot of prospective and prospects out there, but it's something that we have not necessarily actively recruited and offered it to them, because we were not positioned to do that. But, just knowing that informal data collection, this is why we're here now. We definitely have had enough interest to pique our interest, as well as enough interest from other families to say, "I would like to experience this, but I would not like to necessarily come into the building to experience," not in those exact words, but would not like "to come into the building to experience what you offer."

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

Board Members, other questions?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: You know, when we go through our charter application fees and review, many know we have a pretty rigorous process of estimating, or having applicants
estimate, demand and understand how the budget stands up if demand falls short in practice. And you mentioned earlier there's upfront costs, and the cost structure, to be to provide materials and such, is not the same as it is for in-person. What if demand falls short of what you think it will?

MS. MILES: Well, from a student perspective, whether it's one student or two students, we still get the per-pupil allocation. So, we will continue to be able to provide those resources to our students.

And then, just for AppleTree, in terms of how we always plan and we budget, and we think thoughtfully about how we're spending our funds and our resources, we would be able to support two teachers providing that support to those families.

The bulk of the expense, of course, will be a salaried employee to provide the instruction to our students. The next piece will be the resources and the supplies and materials,
again, which will be covered by the per-pupil allocations.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: And I guess my last question -- thank you for that -- is, have you considered piloting outside of this kind of initiative to estimate demand and to kind of refine how this would work in practice?

MS. MILES: I think we have.

Chavaughn, do you want to talk a little bit about any additional pilots that we've sort of thought about?

I would say, one, we want to start small. While this is definitely not a pilot in the sense of these are students and we want them to be successful, we have the data thus far to show that it can work. While we can always grow, we do not want to come to the table with asking for 200 seats or 500 seats and having 500 students trying to engage in virtual learning.

One, again, we know this is a family experience, and not just a student experience, to make it successful. So, in some ways, we are
using this to continue to learn. We're not done.

One thing at AppleTree, one of our core values is continuous improvement. So, this is not, oh, we wrapped it up, put a bow on it, and we're done with this. This is we know what has been successful thus far. We want to engage our families. We want to engage our students and our teachers. We want to do this, and we want to continue to listen, and we want to continue to grow and we want to continue to change to make it even more robust.

So, that, if you see us a year from now and we have had approval, if we get approved, you know, we say, oh, well, there is a demand there, as well as these are the lessons learned, and this is how we see it working. We can go forward and ask for that increase with confidence because we have the data to support it, and we learn so many lessons along the way.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Board Members, any additional questions for the
AppleTree team?

(No response.)

Okay. Ms. Miles, Ms. Brown, thank you so much.

As Dr. Walker-Davis said earlier, we will be voting on these amendments next week.

MS. MILES: Thank you all very, very much.

CHAIR CRUZ: Melodi, I'll turn it back over to you.

MS. SAMPSON: Tonight, the Board will hear from Howard University Public Charter Middle School of Mathematics and Science regarding its request to permanently offer virtual programming for a subset of its students.

Starting in school year '21-22, Howard University Public Charter School proposes offering the Summit Learning Model in a virtual environment for up to 40 students in grades six through eight.

The school will require instructors to simultaneously educate in-person learners while
teaching a small group of virtual learners.

Howard University Public Charter School seeks this shift because it found some students thrived in a virtual setting. The school also sees this change as an opportunity to retain students and families who fear COVID-19.

Representatives from the school are here to answer any questions you may have about this request.

MEMBER SHELTON: Rick?

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes?

MEMBER SHELTON: I will be recusing myself from this discussion and will be going off-camera.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Naomi.

All right. So, Naomi Shelton is recused from this discussion and the vote.

Thank you, Melodi.

And, Briani, do we have -- I see Ms. Procope here.

Will you be speaking on behalf of the school? Is anyone else joining you?
Oh, I think you're on mute.

MS. PROCOPE: Corbet Houston should be joining us also.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Let's make sure --

MR. HOUSTON: Yes, I am here.

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes, there he is there.

Excellent.

Well, I'll turn it over to you for --

if you would both introduce yourselves and any opening comments you have before we ask some questions.

MS. PROCOPE: Okay. Again, thank you to the Board for taking some time to consider our request again.

And I want to thank you, Dr. Walker-Davis, because your remarks were spot-on and exactly where we were thinking, because this is the end differentiation and a reimagined approach to education.

When March 13th hit, 2020, I think everybody was a little bit shocked. But I think,
for our school, it was a shock, but we were not
catched flatfooted. Our school has been sending
technology home to students since 2005, always
preparing them in case there was something that
they needed to do at home. So, when this
occurred, our blended-learning platform that we
had been using for several years made it really
easy for our teachers to easily transition.

One of the things that we do know is
that we understand our families. And like all
charter schools in the city, we have students who
are coming to us from every ward. And in some
instances, we just have some families who felt
like traveling from 8 to 1 was a little bit more
than they wanted to do and asked us, do you have
a virtual option?

On the flip side, we have some
students -- and if you remember your middle
school years, you know how up and down they
are -- there were some students who just simply
thrive at home. And so, we wanted to make sure
that we could offer that particular option to our
students.

Again, as all schools, our intent is for every student to come back and for us to have in-person learning, but, at the same time, we want to make sure that we are reimagining our post education and we are not abandoning the innovation that we've actually tried to perfect during the pandemic.

Summit learning has allowed us to really provide that true personalized learning experience to our students. And the same experience that our students would have in the classroom, we are going to offer them at home.

Corbet, did you want to add anything?

MR. HOUSTON: I think the one other piece that I would add is that -- that we don't often talk about -- is our mentoring piece that we have. We have added a robust sort of a mentoring piece for our young people, so that teachers are able to check in with students one on one. And it has worked tremendously well with our virtual platform since we've been in this
pandemic, and we are actually bringing it back to
the school, so that we have some time throughout
the day in the middle of the week to make sure we
have touch points with our young people, as
opposed to before it was only about 30 minutes.
And we're going to have some more time with our
young people throughout the week on Wednesdays.

MS. PROCOPE: Any questions?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Thank you for your
presentation and for your service to your school
communities in this very, very intense year.

Can you share with us how -- you
mentioned how, for some students, they thrived in
a virtual setting over the last year -- can you
elaborate on how? What sort of assessments or
other kinds of evidence to support that that you
found?

MS. PROCOPE: So, it's interesting.
We've had students come to the building and ask
us, can we stay virtual? And I asked them why.
And these are students who are socially awkward
from a middle school perspective, may have been
the victims of bullying. And bullying is such a
hard thing to lay your finger on because you
actually have to say, "I'm being bullied," and
usually, you don't get that information until
it's exploded.

They've been more focused, and just
being able to -- I don't know. If you even think
about yourself in middle school when we didn't
have any technology, and now middle school with
technology is really totally amazing. And so,
they just felt, it's like I'm more secure because
I don't have all these other things kind of
competing for my attention when I'm in class.

And so, I've recently had a
conversation with a parent who said, you know,
"I'm so excited because my child has all A's."
And I said, "Well, we're looking forward to
seeing her in the building." And she kind of
didn't say anything. And I was like, "What's the
matter?" And she said she would really rather be
home. She said she focuses so much better and
nobody's kind of talking to her, and she's that
kid who just likes to be on her own.

    My comment was, "I know that there are
some social aspects that are always really
important." I said, "You know you can't be in
the closet forever; like you have to come and
have conversations." And she said, "No, I get
that." She said she just would like to be able
to not be in school every day and maybe come in,
you know, if there was something going on. And I
said, "Okay. We'll have to look into that."

    So, it really has so much to do with
the age of the students and that developmental
space that they're in, where in some cases it was
just fine because I'm home. And then, that thing
that we really don't want to talk about is the
students who are home because they're taking care
of some family business. We've got parents who
are working and students who are taking care of
siblings, and it's not something that you ever
want to talk about because it's a little bit
scary, honestly, when you think about it. But
those students were able to take care of that
stuff; parents were able to do what they needed
to do, and the students did well as far as their
academics were concerned.

Did I answer your question?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: You did. Thank
you.

MEMBER GANJAM: Thank you so much for
the presentation on the program and all that
you've been doing in the past year.

I did want to ask a little bit about
the teacher experience, and how are the teachers
going to balance those who are instructing in-
person and virtual learners? Are they together
or is it a separate approach? Can you tell us a
little bit more about that?

MS. PROCOPE: Absolutely. So, when we
gave some thought to this, one of the things that
Mr. Houston and I are really adamant about, we
never forget that we were teachers and are
teachers, too. And so, we try things out before
we try and spring it on our staff members.

And so, we moved to Microsoft Teams
during the pandemic. And so, our teachers were engaging with the students through Microsoft Teams. Then, we got -- and I don't know if you've ever seen them; some are techniques, so I apologize in advance -- the Owl 360 cameras in the classroom. And so, what happened is the teacher's laptop is connected to the screen in the classroom. And so, the teacher can see the children who are at home and the children who are in the classroom.

And so, I tried teaching. I said, "Let me teach a math lesson." I'm a math teacher. So, I did this. And what the student at home is allowed to do is to raise a hand, and what the camera does is, if you are the person speaking, it zeroes in on you, whether you're here or whether you're in the classroom.

And so, it allows the teacher to not have to do anything really, but connect to the camera. And so, the student at home has the same experience as the student who's in the classroom. They're just not in the classroom.
And we tested this with our teachers when they came back. We had a hybrid model in January, and it worked pretty well.

MEMBER GANJAM: So, the students who are remote will be integrating in with the students --

MS. PROCOPE: Yes, ma'am.

MEMBER GANJAM: -- who are in the classroom?

MS. PROCOPE: Yes, ma'am, and they'll have the same teacher.

And for us, the goal of that was, there's going to be a situation, I'm sure, where the parent is going to say, "You know what? You need to go back to school. You're eating all the food," or whatever the situation is, right?

And my grandson lives in North Carolina and he was virtual and he had a whole separate set of teachers, and then, when they went back to school, he had a whole brand-new set. And it was so disconcerting to him. I said to myself, we are not doing that.
And so, the student will have the same teacher, the same schedule, whether they're virtual or in-person. And if they decide to come back into the classroom, it will be very seamless because they'll just go right into the class they had at home.

MEMBER GANJAM:  Sure. Great. Thank you.

And so, from the hybrid model that you were operating this spring, what kind of results or other evidence did you see to support that the students were thriving and doing academically as well, both onsite and remotely?

MS. PROCOPE:  So, Corbet, why don't you speak a little to how Summit gathers that data?

MR. HOUSTON:  Right. So, what we saw was the young people that were in the building, a lot of times, the young people that came into the building, their averages in Summit on the platform was a lot higher than the averages of the young people that were at home, because we
have multiple teachers in the building actually
teaching and working with students to make sure
that they got what they needed academically. And
we also had staff in the building, our social
workers and our counselors, to meet those with
social-emotional needs.

So, it was an all-hands-on-deck
approach to make sure that we were providing what
each student needed. And so, that's pretty much
how it happened.

MS. PROCOPE: And so, just to add onto
that, we, virtually as well, like Corbet talked
about that mentoring piece, all those same touch
points happened for the student who was virtual
as well.

So, I guess to say, were they
thriving, I think our school had the same results
as most schools. We had some like with slips or
learning loss, and we're hoping that we can make
all of that up. Of course, the students who were
there were, you know, somebody was constantly
there. Virtual is going to be virtual. I mean,
we can do as much as we can to continue to mentor and stay on the child, to make sure that they're getting what they need, but there are factors virtually that are out of our control, of course. But our goal is to control the things that we can.

MEMBER GANJAM: Thank you.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you for your presentation.

You mentioned several categories of students that did better with virtual learning or that you thought might do better. Do you have eligibility criteria for the new program? Is participation limited to the categories of students who identified that you think would do better? Or is the program open to anyone who wants to come, up to the limit of 40 students?

MS. PROCOPE: It's open to anyone who wants to come, up to that limit. It would be really difficult to -- if a parent feels this is the best situation for their children, the thing we always tell parents is we're in this together.
So, what's going to be the best option for your child?

MEMBER SANDMAN: If I understood Mr. Houston's description of the Summit research on the experience during the past year, it sounded to me -- you said students who were in-person did better than students who weren't. So, if this is going to be open to anyone, whether or not there are indications that they're likely to do better, do you have evidence that would indicate that virtual learning for the other students is as effective as in-person learning?

MS. PROCOPE: So, my question to that would be, my answer, rather, is, I think that the evidence that we've seen so far nationally is that in-person is always going to be better. At the same time, we have to really think about how we are reimagining education and how we are improving it.

So, we feel we've done a pretty good job from a virtual standpoint, but have those children done better than the students who were
in-person? No, and I don't think that there's a
school that's going to be able to tell you that.
But what we are going to do is, again, refine and
continue to monitor, as we have students who are
at home and parents are not just arbitrarily
picking it.

    So, I see what your question is: can
anybody get in? And maybe that's something that
we investigate, that we really take a look at who
is requesting. So, for example, if we have a
student that we know is struggling and we know
would do better in the building, and the parent
is requesting a virtual option, then, for us,
that would be a conversation and say, "You know
what, Mom? It's looking like reading is a
difficult issue. Can you talk to us a little
more about why you want Johnny to be virtual,
because we think that it would be better in the
building?"

    So, to answer that question, I can't
say to you what that's going to look like at this
point. I can say that we are going to implement
Summit with fidelity and continue to refine our program, so that we can make it so that it does give better results as time goes by.

CHAIR CRUZ: I just want to sort of double-click on the particular question around the model that you're using of the simultaneous instruction, which, talking to many other teachers, they found very challenging. So, I'd just love to understand perhaps other models or approaches that you might have considered. It seems like you've had a lot of success with this model, but just sort of other things you might have --

MS. PROCOPE: We considered, also, having another teacher in the room, where the other teacher was -- so, there's one teacher -- say I'm the math teacher, and Mr. Houston is the other teacher in the room. And so, he's looking at the students who are virtual.

And the reason we weren't thrilled with that is it disconnects the student from the class. So, the teacher is watching, the
secondary teacher is watching, but the primary
teacher is kind of teaching the class. And so,
just kind of connecting the student was really a
challenge.

We, in talking to our teachers,
because we don't do anything unless they're
onboard, and we had a lot of conversations with
them about, you know, "What did you think this
would look like?" And they said, "Yes, let's go.
We want to make sure that we reach everyone."
So, they're kind of tech-savvy people. So, that
could have a lot to do with it.

CHAIR CRUZ: Uh-hum. Thank you.
All right. Another call for any
questions from the Board.
(No response.)
All right. If not, I thank both of
you for everything that you do and for joining us
this evening.

MS. PROCOPE: Thank you.
CHAIR CRUZ: And again, we'll be
voting on this next week.
MS. PROCOPE: Appreciate you. Take care.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

All right. Melodi, I hand it back to you.

MS. SAMPSON: Tonight, the Board will hear from KIPP DC Public Charter School regarding its request to offer virtual programming for 280 pre-K-3 through 12th grade students in school year '21-22.

This school seeks to transition its virtual program into a standalone, online campus at the start of school year '22-23. Participants will engage in two and a half hours of asynchronous instruction and practice, followed by three hours of synchronous instruction. KIPP DC Public Charter School seeks this shift to satisfy demand among families who have long expressed interest in virtual programming.

Representatives from the school are here to answer any questions you may have about the request.
CHAIR CRUZ: Great. Thank you.

I'll just note that Naomi Shelton is recused from KIPP as well. So, she'll remain off-screen.

And I think I see all of our KIPP folks onboard.

So, Susan, if you want to start, maybe by having everyone introduce themselves or you introduce them, and then, we'd love to hear any opening remarks.

MS. SCHAEFFLER: Great. Thank you, Melodi, for your introduction.

My name is Susan Schaeffler. I am KIPP DC's founder and CEO. And I'm joined by five of my colleagues: Susan Toth, who's our Chief Academic Officer; Dane Anderson, our Chief Operating Officer; Jacque Patterson, Chief Community Engagement and Growth Officer; and Ed Han, our Senior Managing Director of Data and Analytics, and Caitlin Maxwell, a former KIPP DC Principal and currently our Director of Virtual Programming.
As Melodi said, we are here today to discuss and answer any questions about our application to amend our charter in two ways. One, to provide virtual instruction for students who select that option in the upcoming school year with or without a medical exemption; and two, to add a virtual campus to our charter starting in the school year 2022-23.

I briefly want to share the rationale for this request. We want to continue a high quality virtual program for medically eligible students and meet the needs of currently enrolled student who have requested access to virtual learning as well.

That said, we are strongly encouraging students to return in-person. We expect and plan for the vast majority of KIPP DC students to learn in-person five days a week. Our in-person is ready to begin in August for the first days of school. However, we also know that, due to medical needs or life circumstances, a small subset of students will need instruction that is
delivered virtually. And we want to be prepared for that as well. We've staffed the program to support that need, and we anticipate being able to support around 280 students this year.

In the 2021-22 school year, our program will serve students who are medically eligible and students who opt-in and meet our selection criteria, which we've shared that criteria with the Board. Our program is inclusive, and the students who are medically eligible will have the same experiences as the students that opt-in.

Here's one real-life situation that illustrates the need for the program: a family shared with us that their son is medically eligible for the program, but their daughter is not. And they believe that having both children in the virtual program will help reduce their family's exposure to COVID-19 and the risks that it carries.

Looking beyond next year, beginning 2022 and '23 school year, we want to open a
standalone virtual school for our students in pre-K-3 through 8th grade. We expect that a small portion of our families will continue to prefer virtual instruction after next school year, and we want students who receive instruction in this way to have a sense of belonging and all the resources and support that a dedicated school can bring.

At the high school level, last year the Board approved an alternative high school program for KIPP DC. We delayed its opening due to the pandemic, and we are now thinking about how that program can meet the needs of our students specifically at the high school level, using hybrid and virtual instruction.

Thank you so much for your time tonight, and we are here to answer any questions that you may have.

Dane Anderson, our COO, will direct each question to the appropriate staff member.

MR. ANDERSON: Thanks, Susan.

As she said, there's a few of us here...
tonight. So, I'll play quarterback for any
questions that come up and try to make sure we
get it to the right person.

CHAIR CRUZ: Great. Thank you all.

Thank you all.

All right, Board, I will open it up
for questions for the KIPP team.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: I'll kick things
off.

Thank you for your presentation, and
it's nice to see everyone.

And, Susan, the last example was
helpful. Because the question I had coming into
this was, if there is an estimate of kind of
clusters of demand by grade span. And some of
the questions that we posed to the AppleTree team
earlier, I'd have for you as well, but I'm
interested in hearing about estimated demand for
early childhood, and then, follow up that with
the very unique needs of kids at that
developmental stage. But I also want to hear how
you're thinking about where demand may be for
other grade levels.

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, we have been working with families on this for the last few months.

Caitlin Maxwell and Jacque Patterson are probably the two people who are closest to that.

And so, Caitlin, maybe we start with you, and you can share some of the data on kind of demand and what we're seeing from families.

And then, Jacque, perhaps you can talk about what you're hearing directly from parents and how that varies by grade band.

So, we'll start with Caitlin.

MS. MAXWELL: Sure. So, as part of the design for our virtual program, I spent a lot of the last couple of months speaking with families to hear about what are some of their unique needs during the pandemic and what do they see as their unique needs longer term.

And currently, what we're looking at in terms of current demand, we've got 93 total
students expressing interest in pre-K-3 through 8th grade. And just about half of those are on direct medical conditions, and then, a handful more are on families who, as Susan mentioned, are living with someone immunocompromised, where they really want to reduce risk.

I know that Jacque in his role has been talking and has some really salient parent quotes to share. So, I'll actually kick it quickly over to him.

MR. PATTERSON: Thank you, Caitlin, and I appreciate that.

One thing that we did learn, as we were out and about throughout this whole pandemic with our families, is that it was a struggle. I mean, let's be honest, it was a struggle for a lot of families. Some families did very well, and some families just it was a very big struggle.

So, we actually did a survey during March and April, and I want to give you some of those numbers, first and foremost, before I give
you some of the quotes as well. Eighty-one percent of our families found it easy to use distance learning technology. I think we did a great job in answering the call. Seventy-eight percent of our families were happy with the remote learning program at their students' school.

But, then, we also had some families -- we have 47 percent of our families that selected "unlikely," 14 percent of that "not sure," and 33 percent who said they, basically, didn't like -- they didn't want to send their kid back to school.

And as we talk about equity -- and I wanted to hit on that point more than anything -- it's that we want to make sure that we have quality learning for all of our kids, regardless of where they live and what they choose to learn by.

We saw that our families really made a demand for this. And so, let me give you some of the quotes that we had from some of the
parents, as we engaged them back in those months of March and April of this year, as we were ending the school year, really trying to find out how we wanted to address this request for this amendment to our Charter.

So, one of the families said, you know, "Healthwise, I just need to make sure that my daughter is safe and that my family is safe. I have always loved KIPP's curriculum. So, I love that they can get that same experience virtually and be safe."

Since we have been home in a virtual setting, the student has had no episodes with their asthma, but when she was in-person, she had to get her nebulizer regularly. So, you know, you have a student that's going through that and what's happening at school.

I also had a parent that said, "I get to see exactly what is going on in the classroom. In a traditional setting, I don't get to see that when that's not happening." They're a very involved parent. "I feel more connected and
involved. I get to see where they excel and
where they struggle."

So, we had a number of these. I have
a few more, but we had a number of these. And
that's how we engaged families, and that's how we
came to this decision of asking for this
amendment.

MS. MAXWELL: And to circle back
really quickly on the actual demand numbers, we
currently have 43 families interested for our
middle school program, so 5th grade through 8th
grade; 36 students in our 1st through 4th grade
band, and then, 18 total in our ECE program. And
if you want that by grade level, I can give it to
you later, too.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: No, that's okay.
Great. I was curious by grade band. But it
sounds like there may be a lot of siblings across
this.

MS. MAXWELL: Correct. Uh-hum.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: So, I'm thinking of a
question that comes to mind, and Board members will open up to other questions as well.

Jacque, from what you shared, it sounds like this is being positioned as an offering for existing KIPP families who are looking for a virtual option that would be available to them over the long haul, like as a permanent option. Is that the correct understanding, that the families that you're looking to serve here are existing KIPP families?

MR. PATTERSON: I'll let Dane point that to the right person, but, yes, that is the overall --

CHAIR CRUZ: Sorry, I'm not used to having a concierge service, so to speak.

(Laughter.)

MR. PATTERSON: But, yes, that is.

That is.

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, it kind of varies by year. I can take this one, too. This next year, yes, we are not backfilling for this next year, and we are telling all families that would
be in this program that they will have an in-
person seat. And so, next year, absolutely.

Long term, as Dr. Walker-Davis
mentioned, this isn't just about the pandemic,
and we're trying to be thoughtful about that.

CHAIR CRUZ: Uh-hum.

MR. ANDERSON: This is not a hearing
to ask for an enrollment ceiling, but it is a
hearing to talk about a long-term program. And
we are committed to this as a long-term program.
And so, we know right now, because we're talking
with our families, that there are KIPP families
that are interested in this. And I imagine, if
we continue this long term, that there would be
other families that would be interested in this,
too.

Again, Jacque and Caitlin, you've been
closest with families over the last month or two,
but anything you would add?

MR. PATTERSON: All I will say, as
Rick is asking that question, is, yes, when I'm
out in the community and people are asking, yes,
they want it for next year, because they saw
things that worked for them or they have a
medical issue in which they want to be at KIPP
and they want to make sure that they can address
that medical issue at home in a safe environment,
but still get the same quality of education.

But, then, there are families that
I've engaged with like, "Okay, Jacque, are you
guys going to do this for the long term? Can we
have this, because we really need this for our
family?" -- for other reasons, like you said,
where one person may qualify and another person
may not, but they have problems in their
household. So, there are families that really
want to see this continue in perpetuity, and we
want to be able to offer that, if this first year
works out really well for us and the demand
continues to grow.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MEMBER GANJAM: Thank you.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: May we ask some

questions?
Oh, go ahead.

MEMBER GANJAM: Thanks, Lea.

Thank you for the presentation.

I wanted to ask a little bit more about the parental expectations. Can you tell us a little bit more about how you are going to train parents to support their children in this virtual setting, and especially for those parents of pre-K-3 and pre-K-4, as we talked about earlier tonight? What are some of the precautions you're taking to prepare them?

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, we've turned to Caitlin a lot so far. I'm going to her again here, and then, also, Susan Toth, who's our Chief Academic Officer. But let's start with Caitlin.

MS. MAXWELL: Sure. So, in doing the research, we spoke with a bunch of people across the country. And one group was a specific group of virtual school leaders on the West Coast. And a big part of their program was this idea of parent professional development, to view parents as that at-home teacher and to really arm parents
with the "what" that their kids are learning and
the "why" they're learning something, and the
"how" they're learning it, so parents know how to
best support their kids at home.

Given that information, we knew it
would be a huge part of our program to do
biweekly parent professional development. We
haven't yet thought of the fun, catchy names
besides "Parent Professional Development," but we
do want to view and treat our parents as teachers
and have those as optional biweekly meetings that
will be recorded for families, if they can't
attend live, and shared with them.

And then, we've also hired a specific
role within our school called the Manager of
Student Success. And that particular person will
work with families directly to hear about any
issues that they're having, whether it's
accessing curriculum, technology issues,
whatever, to problem-solve with that family in a
unique manner, to make sure that parents are
successful.
And then, Susan, did you want to chime in with anything else?

MS. TOTH: Well, I think what Caitlin is also speaking to is a sense of community and belonging for families alongside their children. We know that, when families are empowered and engaged, and feel a strong sense of belonging, that their students will be more successful academically, and they will, therefore, be more engaged in school. And so, we think this is a really cool and innovative element of our program and definitely one component of what families will have the opportunity to participate in.

I think we should also just back up a little bit and describe our virtual program for preschool students, because I think that will tell you a little bit more about what the role of a family member will be in that program.

We know that preschool education is a hugely important part of laying a foundation for success in school and for lifelong learning, and see this virtual program truly as a bridge to in-
person learning over the long haul.

I think we should also be saying that we've hired staff who have strong content knowledge and experience in pre-K and who have also just learned a great deal over the last year in how to teach preschool in a virtual setting.

And again, while we believe that in-person learning is the best learning place for preschool students, we do know that there will be a few families for whom a structured virtual program is the best option, either because of medical perspectives or a family need.

So, our program is set up to include a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous content throughout the day. Our students will learn in both small groups and individually with their learning coach.

We've modified our Tools of the Mind Program for a virtual setting, and students will still participate in that structured play that will emphasize executive functioning skills and self-regulation, as well as writing. We also
will continue to use the Waterford Learning Program for additional skill-building, especially in reading.

One of the other pieces that's really important is that there is that family involvement, and we expect families to be involved, especially probably more in the beginning, but as support with their children, in terms of learning support, technical support, support for all that structured play and conversation and imagination that needs to take place in the preschool classroom. And I think that's where the professional development and the support group that we'll create in these sessions with families will be really important.

MR. PATTERSON: And then, if I may add one more thing, a nuance that we've also made is around our (audio interference) coordinators which we normally used to have at our schools, and everything, that used to just, you know, when someone was absent, making sure that they're in school and everything. We've changed that into
Family Liaisons which will be outreaching and trying to have wraparound services. Because one thing we learned from COVID is that there are a lot of other things that come into play, and these new Family Liaisons will play an instrumental part as well.

You've heard Susan Toth talk about all the things that are going to be done on behalf of the academic to make them feel part of the community, but also, actually, starting to reach out to families that really struggled sometimes through the pandemic and trying to be proactive about addressing some of the issues that may have kind of stymied their ability to do their best. We'll also be doing that as well, and working very closely with our families.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you for your --

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim, did you have a question?

MEMBER SANDMAN: I do. I have a few questions.

Thank you for your presentation.
Your application, on page 2, says
-- let me find it. The print is kind of small on
my screen. You say, "The remote program is open
to all KIPP DC students, but provides a rigorous
selection process to ensure students who enter
into this program can thrive."

Do you have any selection criteria?
I don't see any here. And if not, can you
describe how this rigorous selection process will
work?

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, absolutely. I
think it is detailed in the application on page
4, but Caitlin Maxwell is also very familiar with
that. And so, she can talk you through that
specifically. But we are working with families
already using that criteria.

MS. MAXWELL: Yes, so one thing that
I want to be clear is that virtual learning is
not a one-size-fits-all approach. And in the
last 18 months, many of our students have been
successful and some were not. And we are very
honest about that.
Given the program design and research, we want to make sure that the students who choose our program have had some success with virtual learning in the past, and we also want to be able to serve every student and at the same know how important it is to have a certain threshold.

In the next school year, the 2021-22 school year, we expect our virtual program to serve our current KIPP DC students who are medically eligible or who meet this selection criteria.

The first is achieving a daily attendance rate greater than 90 percent for virtual instruction for last school year.

Second, maintain academic progress during that virtual school year.

And third, attending an in-depth enrollment meeting with the program's leadership to review expectations and program details, and to give families a chance to ask any questions they may have about the program.

If the student is in high school, we
are also going to work with our high school leadership team to receive support in opting into the program.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Do you have research or your own data that indicates that students across this grade span, pre-K-3 through 12, that, for them, virtual education is an effective as in-person learning?

MR. ANDERSON: I think we've learned a lot about that in the last year and a half.

Susan Toth and Ed Han are the people that are closest to that.

And, Susan, I'll start with you, but Ed may have a lot of the detail behind it.

MS. TOTH: Sure. I think there are a few ways that we know that our virtual program was effective. And again, I would say we have to look at effective on multiple levels and multiple layers and through multiple lenses, as we think about what the last year and a half has been for our students and for our families.

First, our students grew academically.
While this is a very challenging and unusual year, we used a combination of formative and summative assessment tools across the last year to make sure that we had lots of different ways of measuring student growth or lack. And there are certainly areas we know, based on our data, where we need to focus going into the next school year, including K-2 literacy, which is an area that we are investing currently considerable resources of time, curriculum, and professional development for our staff. But there are some really positive highlights from our data that I'd love to share with you, as just, again, a note that we saw some really positive and strong success.

Seventy-six percent of our middle school students made growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year in math. Seventy-five percent of our 3rd and 4th grade students increased mastery on our Common-Core-aligned assessments, and our 1st and 2nd graders had an average performance of 80 percent on our
end-of-unit Common-Core-aligned assessments,
which puts them on par with students in previous
years.

I think there is another way that I
would say we knew that our virtual program was
effective. We administered the Family Survey.
We administered several surveys across the year,
but we administered a pretty hefty one in March
and April around a few data points that I want to
pull out from that survey to share, in addition,
that I think are especially pertinent, as we
think about to build from some of the success and
some of the areas of growth from last year and
developing the program moving forward.

So, 78 percent of our families said
that they were happy with the remote learning at
their child's school. Now, again, when I say
March, which was the full calendar year later
-- so, we were pretty pleased with that. Ninety-
five percent of our families said they were proud
that their children attend KIPP DC. Eighty-eight
percent of our families felt that our teachers
had built strong relationships with their children, and 84 percent believe that our curriculum is culturally relevant and affirming.

I think that, when you look at this whole picture, all of these data points, in particular, this is a really great foundation from which to build and development a really, really strong virtual program.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you.

The three eligibility criteria that you mentioned previously, I'm not seeing those in the application. Can you show me where they are?

MR. ANDERSON: Jim, I'm sorry. Yes, I think that I referred to the application. I was actually referring to the staff's writeup.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Okay.

MR. ANDERSON: It's on page 4 of the staff's writeup.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Okay. And one last question. If you know, if a medically eligible student -- medically eligible for an exemption from in-person learning -- has a sibling who's
in-person attendance will put the medically
eligible student at risk, does the sibling
qualify for a medical exception?

MR. ANDERSON: Caitlin, has this come
up? I think we're speculating a little. And so,
I don't want to go too far down this path because
I think our understanding from OSSE is that it's
actually at the discretion of a physician. And
so, I don't want to pretend that any of us are
physicians. But, Caitlin, has this exact example
come up?

MS. MAXWELL: It has. And currently,
under current guidance, they are not eligible.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Another round
of questions for KIPP? Does anyone have any
additional questions?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: I'm just going to
follow up on the home environment where there may
be multiple children who would be engaging in in-
person, I don't think it's only my experience
that my children behave differently with me than
with other adults. And thinking about very young children who may need very hands-on engagement from a caregiver, but that same caregiver also needs to support the virtual learning of other children in the household. Through the pandemic, millions of families experienced this not totally fun situation.

But, in a permanent environment, how do you envision supporting parents? This is going to be every day and this is not where alternatives get through this, this kind of situation. What does that parent support or caregiver support look like, so that the student is really getting the most rigorous and high value experience?

MR. ANDERSON: Caitlin and Susan, do you want to jump in here?

MS. MAXWELL: Yes, I'll start off.

Again, I keep coming back to the research and conversations that I did for the program. But one that really stood out was an online professor, an online education college professor,
who just studied K-12 online education for kids. He talked about how important it is to address the emotional burden for parents of educating their children and making sure that we provide a supportive environment for families to talk to each other, to work with each other, and to hear what's working at home, when they do have multiple children.

And so, one thing that we have been really thoughtful in doing is making sure that we create some sort of community with families, whether it's every other month in-person optional activities where they can get together, but, essentially, creating a really broad support group for our parents that are in the program, so they can share the best practices.

Susan, did you want to add on?

MS. TOTH: Yes. I can't emphasize how important these initial conversations are with families, too, to help them understand what they're signing up for. And again, I think in this next few months, we want to be as responsive
as we can to what we're seeing in student
performance in actual learning spaces and time.
We do have staff dedicated to providing that
onsite support. We will have a hub from which we
operate, so that families can come in and get
resources that they need.

I think we're also thinking about all
the additional layers beyond, in addition to
classroom learning, that will support families --
things like all the tech support you can imagine
being available to them; books; resources;
materials and manipulatives; nice, like great
ways and consistent ways that students store
materials. I mean, all of those organizational
things that I think could drive families a little
crazy, if they were inventing on their own. We
will make sure that we're providing just real
clarity around some of those systems because
we've now practiced those over the last year or
so.

I think other things like meal
delivery service, some other things that are just
going to be, like that are challenging sometimes
for families, we're going to make sure that those
are also available for our families, too.

MS. MAXWELL: And one quick thing I'll
add on, a very technical note, is that our
schedule for pre-K-3 through 8th grade all is the
same. There is a asynchronous video block that
students are engaging in, and then, there's live
classes in the afternoon. So, you can truly
think of it as a living room school, where a
parent is monitoring their kids, but they're all
engaging along the same schedule, despite their
grade levels. So, we can have families sort of
tuning in to one segment of the day and really
being able to focus on that. Everything down to
a lunch break is aligned for those grades.

MS. TOTH: And I think you can tell,
too, that we're really passionate about this. We
just have so much deep respect and humility about
how complex and important this role as a family
member is in this experience. And I think that
will serve us really well, as we continue to
refine and get better at what we're doing.

MR. ANDERSON: I would just add, kind of tactically, too -- I mentioned this earlier -- we're also not back until next year. So, all of these students, if and when they're comfortable, their family's comfortable, they will have a seat in a KIPP DC school. And so, that will be a distinction next year, too.

MEMBER SANDMAN: I have one more question about eligibility criteria. This criterion that the student must have maintained academic progress during school year 2021, how will you assess whether the student maintained academic progress?

MR. ANDERSON: Caitlin, do you want talk through? Caitlin and Susan?

MS. TOTH: Sure. I think that's, essentially, looking at a combination of, again, attendance, grades, and all the assessments that we've administered over the last year to make sure that a student who is at significant jeopardy of grade-level loss, it's not due to any
combination of those factors. But we're aware of that and that the family who is signing their child up understands some of those critical factors and what would be needed to be able to perform in a virtual environment, if that's where we proceed to go.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Unless there are any last questions, I will thank the KIPP team. We appreciate always everything you guys do, especially as you're preparing for the new school year. We appreciate all that you shared with us this evening. We'll be voting on this next week.

MS. SCHAEFFLER: Thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you very much.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thanks.

MS. TOTH: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Melodi, we're going to welcome Naomi Shelton back, and I believe we have one more school you'll be talking to us about.
MS. SAMPSON: Tonight, the Board will hear from Maya Angelou Public Charter School regarding its request to offer a hybrid learning model at its high school campus.

Maya Angelou Public Charter School High School is an alternative school for opportunity youth. Under the proposed model, students will engage in virtual and in-person instruction. The number of hours each student spends in either environment will depend on their individual needs. Maya Angelou Public Charter School expects most students to continue learning in-person, but it seeks flexibility to permit students to complete coursework virtually. The school says this approach will improve its ability to meet students' varying needs.

Representatives from the school are here to answer any questions you may have about the request.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Melodi.

All right. Maya Angelou Team, if you'd take a moment to introduce yourselves?
Let's make sure we've got everyone, and then, if you'd like to start with any opening remarks?

DR. MENDOZA-DAVIS: Sure, absolutely.

Good evening, Mr. Cruz and Charter School Board Members. I'm Clarisse Mendoza-
Davis, and I currently serve as Chief Executive Officer of MAPCS and See Forever. And I'm joined by my colleague. I'll let her introduce herself this evening.

MS. SPEIGHT: Good evening, everyone.

Good evening. Thank you so much for allowing us to be here.

My name is Azalia Speight, and I am the Chief of Schools for the Maya Angelou schools and See Forever Foundation.

DR. MENDOZA-DAVIS: Great. So, thank you so much for considering our application this evening. I just want to share a little bit of context for this particular request that is before you tonight.

So, actually, back in school year 2015-2016, our high school campus began its
implementation of blended learning. That meant that teachers not only continued direct whole
group instruction in our classrooms, but we also
began utilizing several online learning platforms
for daily teaching and learning, as well as
academic intervention and credit recovery. And
this particular approach allowed many students to
engage in and complete coursework at their own
pace, oftentimes offsite, and also, oftentimes,
outside of the traditional school day, in the
evenings and on weekends.

Since then, and long before the
COVID-19 pandemic, while not explicitly outlined
in our agreement with PCSB, our staff has created
flexible hybrid and remote learning plans that
have been integral to the academic success of our
students in need of this type of flexibility in
order to stay on track to graduation.

Scenarios that prompted our school
leadership to put these plans in place include
students who were court-involved with standing
parole appointments or other court requirements
in the middle of the school day or towards the end of the school day; students who were parents and without consistent child care; students who were expecting a child or who had just given birth to a child; students with critical medical conditions, and therefore, in need of an exemption, and students who were employed full time because they were the only source of income for their families, and oftentimes, fully independent or actually unaccompanied.

We're really grateful that PCSB has shown their support for Maya students facing these scenarios by certifying scholars for graduation who had a hybrid or virtual learning plan in place.

And so, we're hoping that we can continue using this method that's worked well for these particular students. And Azalia and I are happy to answer any questions you have about this particular endeavor this evening.

CHAIR CRUZ: Great. Thank you, both of you.
Board Members, time for questions.

MEMBER GANJAM: Hi. Yes, I just wanted to better understand some of the key differences between the current blended learning model and the proposed hybrid learning model.

DR. MENDOZA-DAVIS: Sure, absolutely. Well, one thing, I think, that certainly prompted this is that we are acutely aware of the Mayor's Executive Order for all students in school five days a week and for the full day. And we certainly want to be in compliance with that, but also feel that, based on our students' needs, we have a pretty strong and compelling case in place to make sure that we can continue to execute hybrid and/or virtual learning for a small group of students.

Now, as it pertains to your question, I think that, for blended learning, the majority -- so, all of our students engage in blended learning and they are on campus with us, most of our students, the majority of our students, prior to the pandemic, are on campus with us full time
five days a week for the school day.

And so, pedagogically, in the classroom, teachers are doing small group rotations. They are working individually with students one on one while students are working on their own on Edgenuity, on some of our other academic intervention platforms.

And so, that's sort of really the biggest difference, right? That blended learning implementation and our hybrid or virtual learning, we're using the same curriculum and academic and intervention and credit recovery applications. It's just a matter of synchronous versus asynchronous, if you will.

Azalia, anything you want to add to that?

MS. SPEIGHT: No, you covered it all.

DR. MENDOZA-DAVIS: Okay. Great.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Thank you for your presentation.

Can you share with us what kind of outcomes, assessments results, or other kind of
evidence that demonstrate that students have
succeeded academically using virtual instruction?

DR. MENDOZA-DAVIS: Sure, absolutely.

So, we prepared for this presentation tonight to
speak specifically to a cohort of students who
had actually been totally disengaged and
disconnected from school altogether. So, we
focused on these six students, in particular,
because of their ability this year with the
pandemic to engage in hybrid/virtual learning.
Three of them actually got back on track to
graduation and graduated in June. The other
three are on track to graduate next month in
August. In that cohort of six students, two of
them are parents of children and we have three
that are completely living on their own and
independent from other family members.

So, I think, Lea, for us, of course,
we have, as part of our charter goals, we're
measuring academic growth in reading, in math,
and in writing, but we are really trying to work
to improve our ACGR and our graduation goal.
Actually, as I was checking in with Azalia and the team, we're still validating the data, but it looks like, for this past school year that we just ended, we will have actually met our ACGR goal, which is part of our charter goals, and we're really excited about that. I think it should be part of that to the flexibility of hybrid/remote learning and the barriers that it helped remove for some students, especially those facing the particular scenarios that we shared earlier.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Thank you.

MEMBER SHELTON: Could you all describe how you've engaged your overall community, inclusive of teachers and families, and how they played a role in developing this proposal?

DR. MENDOZA-DAVIS: Sure.

Azalia, do you want to take that one?

MS. SPEIGHT: Sure. At the height of -- can everyone hear me okay? Okay. Sorry, I have a 2-year-old in the background, so please
bear with me.

At the height of the pandemic, we surveyed all of our parents and we surveyed our students. And at that particular time, 60 percent of our students and families believed that they would benefit from continuing the hybrid model. So, a combination of in-person or, you know, virtual learning.

We also brought parents in to kind of see what we want -- we brought parents in to hear from them exactly what kinds of supports they would want from us, if their student remained hybrid during the upcoming school year. And so, a lot of parents have some fear about their students coming back, but the majority of them were open to coming back. Although we had a small group of students who were very successful, specifically the ones that Dr. Mendoza mentioned, and they completely feel like being totally hybrid would work for them.

And so, as we met with teachers, we wanted to determine how can we help students
still be successful if we remain in this hybrid space. Now we're only seeking a very small percentage of our student body. About 30 students total is what we believe would benefit from being hybrid.

And teachers felt like ensuring that they still have access to all of the academic programming, all of the curricula programming, all of the academic interventions, and our wraparound services would help them succeed, as we continue in the hybrid model. Teachers also felt that they should be able to engage via classroom, via office hours, via after-school hours, that they have the opportunity to come and meet with teachers to give additional support.

And so, while it is not our endeavor to be completely remote, we understand that, based on the needs of our students and what families have communicated to us, that this hybrid model would benefit a small group of our students. But our teachers are also onboard to ensure that those students are not left behind,
that they get everything that all of the other
students who are in-person every day will be
receiving.

DR. MENDOZA-DAVIS: Naomi, we also
submitted to the staff a letter from a parent who
shared more about her daughter's experience. And
her daughter does meet the criteria, some of the
criteria that we shared earlier. And so, if
you're able to read that letter, I think that
parent testimony was really powerful as well.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thank you both.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you very much
for your presentation.

Melodi's memo, on page 2, says, "Maya
Angelou PCS identifies situations in which it
will permit students to complete all their
coursework virtually. These situations include,
but are not limited to," and then, there's a list
of six specific situations in which students will
be eligible to do their coursework entirely
virtually.

I like the specificity of the list
very much. These are very clear eligibility
criteria. But the introductory language,
"including, but not limited to," suggests that
this might be kind of mushy. Do you intend to
limit the eligibility criteria to those six
things? Would you be comfortable limiting our
approval to those six things? If there's more,
can you specify it?

DR. MENDOZA-DAVIS: Sure. And, Jim,
I think we'll share a little bit more context.
So, both Azalia and I understand the high school
intimately because at some point we either were
serving as Interim Co-Principals of the high
school campus together or separately were Interim
Principals at that campus about four or five
years ago.

And I think sometimes we have had
students who they, themselves, have voiced
concern or parents have voiced concern for
students' safety and safe passage to school. And
so, depending on a student's sort of situation
out in the community, if they are involved in a
community beef, if they are a target of other
students, usually who are not a part of our
learning community at Maya, parents have gotten
together with our school team to figure out some
type of hybrid approach to keep the student safe
and prevent them from being a victim of violence.

And so, I think that's really the
other scenario that we had in mind. We weren't
quite sure if it would necessarily pass muster.
And again, we've only had to do that for a very,
very small, like less than five groups of
students, but it's real and that's what we've had
happen in the past five years that Azalia and I
have served on the staff here.

So, that's the one other scenario that
we're really talking about. Otherwise, we are
comfortable with the criterion that we've listed.

MEMBER SANDMAN: I --

MS. SPEIGHT: And if I --

MEMBER SANDMAN: Go ahead. Sorry.

MS. SPEIGHT: Sorry. If I may add

just one other scenario? It hasn't happened in
the last two years, but three years ago, we had a student who was the eldest of, I believe, four children. And during the school year, the mother became terminally ill and needed an immediate caretaker. And so, we worked with that family to provide opportunity for the student to remain remote one or two days a week to support the parent, and the student will come in after school, will come in in the morning and pick up work or sit with the teacher, until, unfortunately, her mother did succumb to the medical challenges that she faced. And after a small period of time being away, the student was able to reengage with us full time. Again, we haven't experienced that in the last two years, but that might be another scenario where we would have to work with the student and the family.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you. That's helpful. I'd be more comfortable pinning down what the eligibility criteria are. I'm not comfortable writing a blank check, just saying, you know, "These things and whatever else comes
If the Board approves, I hope that you might be able to work things out with the staff to come up with definitions that encompass the situations that you're concerned about, so we can define the universe.

MS. SPEIGHT: Absolutely.

DR. MENDOZA-DAVIS: Absolutely.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Do we have any further questions for the team from Maya Angelou?

MEMBER SHELTON: Just one last question about the evidence that the staff feels they have to demonstrate that students have over this course of time been successful academically. I know that you mentioned the letter from a parent, but if you have any other stories or anecdotes, that would be helpful to hear what has been working in this transitional phase.

MS. SPEIGHT: Sure. I can add that, as you all know, we serve opportunity youth. And
so, there are a small group of students,
particularly some of our students who are
exceptional learners, who really struggled pre-
pandemic and, of course, during the pandemic.
And so, we were able to, of course, continue to
support our students with IEPs during the
pandemic, but we could not do so without
wraparound services.

And what I mean by that is that we
provided home visits to students. We sometimes
allowed students to come in the building, of
course, ensuring that everyone abided by social
distancing, to provide them one-to-one tutoring
or one-to-one academic support.

Many of those students, although they
struggled pre-pandemic, because things were
tailored specifically to their needs during the
middle of the pandemic with the virtual learning,
they knew that they could reach out to a teacher
on Zoom; they could reach out to a teacher by
calling the school to set up an appointment; they
could have a separate Zoom session with a teacher
or a support staff member to really dig deep into whatever the other academic challenges they were having at the time.

And the one particular student that I have in mind is a student who, before the pandemic, really, really struggled emotionally to connect in school and remain engaged. The time that the student was able to spend virtually really allowed her to focus on the academics and acquire a lot of the instruction and intervention that was afforded to her in this very one-on-one and focused setting. And so, that particular student, I would say, with a lot of support and prayer, was really, really able to make great use of this time that we were in the virtual setting and actually graduated this past June.

We have several students who experienced just the opportunity to kind of relax and work at a pace that was more comfortable for them. They were able to really take the instruction that was given by their teachers, grapple with it in a way, practice with it in a
way, ask for help in a setting that was comfortable for them, and not as distracting as it can be sometimes in the school building.

And so, these are just small examples of how students were able to really, really move from a place of just existing to thriving in the middle of the pandemic academically. Now, again, we are only looking at a very small group of our students. And what I am sharing is specific to the small group of students who have succeeded.

We know that it is best for all students be in-person 100 percent of the time, and that, ultimately, what the majority of our program will look like. But we have had students who were very successful doing the hybrid model this year, and we want to make sure that we continue to afford that option to students who meet very specific and clear criteria.

Does that answer your question, Naomi?

MEMBER SHELTON: It does to a certain extent. I also wanted to hear about some other academic outcomes. Sorry.
MS. SPEIGHT: Okay. Got it. So, do you want to specify a little more or would you like -- so, what I can also share is that students who participated in our virtual learning or our hybrid model had a combination of, of course, the online learning platform that we offer, but, then, also, teacher-created, independent study projects that they were able to do.

Students who at times were not comfortable presenting academically in class could record their presentations, send them in to their teachers. Small group instruction absolutely took place in the blended learning model where students were in breakout rooms with small groups and really able to grapple with the academics, and then, show mastery.

We have seen that many of our students have increased their reading levels. And this year, we saw an increase in our MyWrite writing goal. We saw more students really being able to show growth and improvement in the writing
standards that we have set forth in our writing goal.

So, we are excited because we may not have been able to provide as many students with the opportunity as we did this year, so that we could really see the type of student that would be successful with the virtual or the hybrid learning model.

Does that answer your question about academic outcome?

MEMBER SHELTON: Yes.

MS. SPEIGHT: Okay.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Well, Maya Angelou Team, thank you for joining us this evening. Again, this will be something we'll be voting on at our meeting next Monday morning, and we'll look forward to seeing you then.

DR. MENDOZA-DAVIS: Thank you so much.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thanks.

MS. SPEIGHT: Thank you. Have a good evening.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. We have one
more item for the hearing. I invite Nada Mousa to come and speak to us about Digital Pioneers. And if we have the Digital Pioneers team here as well, we'd look for them to join us.

MS. MOUSA: Thank you so much, Rick.

I appreciate it.

Hello. My name is Nada Mousa. I'm a School Performance Department Specialist.

Tonight, the Board will discuss Digital Pioneers Academy Public Charter School's request to include graduation requirements to the existing Charter.

In December 2020, DC PCSB conditionally approved Digital Pioneers Public Charter School's request to expand to grades 9 through 12 and increase its enrollment ceiling from 360 to 840.

Now that it has DC PCSB's approval to open a high school, Digital Pioneers Public Charter School proposes adding graduation requirements to its charter agreement.

Under the proposed graduation
requirements, students must earn a total of 26.5
credits to graduate. Two of those credits must
be in computer and science, and two credits must
be in leadership development.

Currently, in its third year of
operation, Digital Pioneers Public Charter School
educates 337 students in grades six through eight
in Ward 6. The school’s mission is to develop
the next generation of innovators. We prepare
students to meet or exceed the highest academic
standards while cultivating the strength of
character necessary to both graduate from four-
year colleges and thrive in 21st century careers.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

And I see Ms. Ashton, who I believe
has joined us every other meeting this year. So,
welcome. Welcome again. Would you like to open
up with some remarks? And I'm sure the team has
some questions for you.

MS. ASHTON: Chairman Cruz, I was
thinking the exact same thing. I think I'm a
regular at these meetings.
And I will actually start by saying I have listened for this last two hours of just the innovation and the thoroughness in terms of questioning around, you know, this pandemic was so tough, but to hear these schools and the members of the Board just ask these questions around how do we continue the learning in an innovative way -- it's exactly what DPA is all about, although we're not asking for any virtual learning. We just want to do the work that we set out to do over this last year.

But I just have appreciated your questions, the presentations from schools, and just think, wow, what a great city we are in to even entertain these questions about what's best for kids and how to meet the needs of our students and families.

So, I'd just say thank you to the Board and to staff for all that hard work virtually. Hopefully, we're going to get back in-person soon, even for these Board meetings, but maybe not.
Okay. Sorry. So, with that, DPA, you know, as I think Nada said, our graduation requirements are consistent with our application. They are consistent with city requirements, our mission. They meet and exceed the graduation requirements for high school. And so, we are just excited to continue this work and to develop the next generation of innovators.

And with that, I'm happy to answer any questions.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right, Board Members, I'll kick off with one question which is, so these requirements are different from what was contemplated when you came before us asking for the expansion? Is that --

MS. ASHTON: Yes, we actually, when we did the expansion, we did not actually present graduation requirements.

CHAIR CRUZ: That's right. Okay.

MS. ASHTON: And so, this is the first time that we actually have presented them, as required by the policy.
CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you for that clarification.

MEMBER SHELTON: So, I'll kick off with a question. Of course, my questions are always heavily related to engagement. Can you speak to any ways that your school community includes teachers and families, and possibly students, playing a role in addressing and creating these requirements?

MS. ASHTON: Yes, a great question, Ms. Shelton. I think, as we have done our whole expansion request, we have consistently engaged our faculty, our parents, and our scholars. I think this specific one is around the leadership opportunities. That is something that our scholars have consistently said that they want to learn computer science, but they want to learn how to use computer science to do what they want to do. And so, that is really a direct response to the feedback that we heard from our scholars.

I think the other requirements are also very consistent. Our scholars, actually,
you know, they love DPA; they love math science
and computer science, but they really want a
well-rounded experience. So, everything when it
comes to history and world language and
electives, which are the city's requirements,
that is exactly what they ask for.

They have really pushed us, including
our families, on making sure our scholars get a
more typical high school experience in the
context of making sure we keep computer science
and we keep our community together. So, that's
really very much been the feedback. We have come
and said, no, our parents only wanted to study
computer science and they really want to go into
these tech industries and fields, but the
feedback from our scholars and for our
communities, they really want this well-rounded
experience that includes computer science.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thanks so much for
that.

MS. ASHTON: You're welcome.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Thank you for
this. It's nice to see you again, Ms. Ashton.

Can you share with us as to what
supports are in place to ensure that students are
on track to graduate?

MS. ASHTON: That's a great question, primarily given coming out of this pandemic. And so, if you asked that question outside of the pandemic, I'd probably have something completely different.

But now, where we are, we are thinking very intentionally about the 9th grade year. I think the staff has pushed us, when it comes to special education for our scholars, that we're not as engaged. I'm actually pretty proud that we had a 93 percent attendance for scholars participating in three-plus hours of live Zoom lessons. But when we pulled that data back, we saw that 60 percent were really engaged. And so, for that 40 percent who were not really engaged or fully engaged, we're thinking through in the fall like double math block, double ELA blocks.

Continue to offer the range of
supports in terms of supports in terms of
computer science and science and social studies.

However, really making sure that, when we come
back, we are really doubling down on ELA and
math. It is something that I think we maybe
would have done in the pandemic, but, as we
really thought about the 9th grade year being so
pivotal, we really said, let's double down in
terms of the double offerings in ELA and math,
while still making sure our scholars get a well-
rrounded experience.

And then, so you may ask, well, what
if a scholar comes in at 10th grade or 11th
grade, because we will always take scholars, even
if they haven't been with us in 9th grade. And
so, we've thought, well, we still want to double
down on the core content areas, and they will
have elective course offerings instead of some
required course offerings that are going to put
them on track.

So, computer science will always be a
staple, but being able to take two AP classes is
something that we are really excited for, because we think that puts scholars on the path to college and career success. However, we really want to make sure that they meet the minimum requirements at any point that they've come in. And so, doubling down upon entry, I would say, but, then, making sure that their other course offerings are electives, so that they can have those opportunities for engagement are just a couple of ways that we've thought about that.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: And the question that we've asked you before, but it's at least a month later, how does the moment look?

MS. ASHTON: The moment looks really, really great for us. We are currently at 457 fully enrolled, meaning all of their paperwork. And we actually have -- when I heard this number today, I thought, oh, gosh -- but it's 490 that we have actually extended offers to. There's about 10 who -- we haven't declined anyone because we just assume that some parents may not -- maybe they will not come back, but maybe they
just haven't really been on their computer trying
to complete re-enrollment forms. So, right now,
we have 491 for our 480 spots that we have
extended offers to, and we are doing everything
between now and opening to make sure that
enrollment forms are in and that we really are
capturing the true intent of families.

And so, we feel really excited in
terms of the enrollment, but we also anticipate
that there will be some change in the fall in
terms of what parents' true intentions. We do
intend to open 100 percent in-person. We think
that may mean some families make different
choices. And so, we are continuing to recruit
and hope to have a wait list even going into the
fall.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Mashea, what does that
enrollment number for the entering 9th grade
class? Could you just break that down?

MS. ASHTON: Yes. It's, right now, we
have 124 9th graders who have been extended an
offer, and 118 who have completed their full enrollment. And our target was 120.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right.

MS. ASHTON: Yes.

CHAIR CRUZ: Room to grow.

MS. ASHTON: A little, just a little.

But, you know, we do anticipate that families will make changes.

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes.

MS. ASHTON: We have scholars who are wait-list for other schools. And so, it is moving. It's moving in the right direction, but we're continuing the outreach. We're continuing the engagement. We're just continuing to get folks excited about being back in school in-person, which I think is exciting, and lots of questions families have. So, we're trying to work through that.

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes. Great. Thank you.

MS. ASHTON: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Other questions, Board Members?
(No response.)

Otherwise, we will say thank you to Ms. Ashton, and we will be at the end of our hearing and ready to begin our meeting.

So, one more call for any questions.

(No response.)

And, Dr. Walker-Davis, we're voting on this not next Monday, but -- or are we voting for that on this next Monday as well?

DR. WALKER-DAVIS: I'm going to ask someone on our staff to clarify the right date.

CHAIR CRUZ: Because I know the other four we are voting on next Monday.

DR. WALKER-DAVIS: Yes, the four are we voting on. This is normal process. But I will make sure that you know exactly when they're voting on it.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay.

MS. MOUSA: This is part of our normal process. So, you will be voting on this in September.

CHAIR CRUZ: In September?
DR. WALKER-DAVIS: Thank you, Nada.

MS. MOUSA: You're welcome.

MS. MOUSA: Thank you.

All right. Thank you, Mashea.

MS. ASHTON: Thank you. Be safe. See you soon.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thanks.

Okay, we're going to roll right into our meeting.

And if I could get a motion to approve the agenda?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: I move to approve the agenda of the D.C. Public Charter School Board meeting of July 19th, 2021.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. I got a motion and a second.

As you all know, we need to do a roll call vote.

Ricarda Ganjam?

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim Sandman?
MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: I have also an aye from Saba Bireda and her proxy.

And it is aye from me.

The motion passes. The agenda is approved.

And I will now hand it over to Erin Kupferberg to talk about our COVID-19 Impact Policy Revision, which we are due to vote on this evening.

MS. KUPFERBERG: Yes, thank you very much.

Hi, everybody. I always feel like I round out your evenings.

(Laughter.)

Hi. My name is Erin Kupferberg, and I am a School Performance Department Senior Manager.
Tonight, I am asking you to vote on the COVID-19 Impact Policy. This Board approved the original policy in May 2020 with the purpose of clarifying how DC PCSB staff will implement key policies and practices impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in school year 2019-20.

The Policy was again revised in December 2020 to update how DC PCSB would implement key policies and practices in school year 2020-21. The revisions this time focus on three key areas:

First, we stated the accountability data we will be collecting for school year 2020-21. This data includes high school measures and adult education growth and achievement data.

Second, the COVID-19 Impact Provision is proposed for schools undergoing review and renewal in the next two years who are not currently meeting their goals, due to a lack of data from the last two years.

Third, DC PCSB is proposing how we will use transitional goals data to assess
charter performance in reviews and renewals for school years 2021-22 and 2022-23 data, noting that data for next year, school year 2021-22, will be used as baseline data. And we will start to evaluate charter school performance with data beginning in 2022-23.

We are proposing to collect school-administered growth data from all students in grades kindergarten through 8th and optional for high school grades, in addition to the data we have collected annually as part of our accountability system.

We received two public comments, one submitted by a charter support organization and one from an LEA. The public comment details are outlined in the table attached to the memo.

Based on public comment, we made the following adjustments:

Transitional goals data will include the standard annual data collection to the greatest extent possible. For example, this will include state assessment data, attendance, and
class scores. SAT and ACT results will be included as part of the high school Career and College Readiness Measure, instead of independent measures.

And additional policy clarifications were added.

And now, if you have any questions before the vote, I can answer those.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Erin.

Board Members, a lot of detail in here and a lot of work contained in this.

I'll just note I particularly appreciate, as we do with some of these more toothy policies, which are usually all the ones that you deal with, Erin, the mapping of the public comment alongside our response. Very, very helpful certainly to us, but, hopefully, also to schools and others who are submitted the comments. So, thank you for continuing that.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Erin, could you remind us how this fits into our ongoing work to revise and refresh our Accountability Framework?
MS. KUPFERBERG: I can. Thank you for that question.

So, we are coming out of last year where we did not collect any accountability data. And this year, as we know, we are collecting limited accountability data, particularly to assess schools for their goals.

This next two years, looking at it as a bridge to get a baseline of data, as I said, for next year and start to be able to evaluate goals for all schools in reviews and renewals more thoroughly the year after.

The accountability work has kicked off and is being designed, for lack of a better word, over the next two years. So, the phase for this next year is identifying all the business rules for measures, and we will be using some of this data that we are collecting to help make those decisions.

So, we are making decisions -- I don't want to say post-COVID because I think we're still getting through this -- but with data after
kind of this year and a half of lack of data
versus making all of our decisions with data
prior to the pandemic. And then, that second
year, as we have a Pilot Accountability Framework
after the 2022-23 school year, again, we will
have another set of data to help us analyze it
and confirm our proposal on our Accountability
Framework. So, we are making all of our
decisions based on data and information that we
have as we transition into this new post-COVID
world.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: All right. Thank
you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Other questions? I know
we had an opportunity when this was opened up
from a public hearing, and again, the public
comments and our response is pretty well
detailed. But this is one last opportunity for
questions before I take this to a vote.

(No response.)

Erin, as always, the detail satisfies
everyone's questions in advance.
MS. KUPFERBERG: Well, thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: If there aren't any questions, I will take a motion.

MEMBER SHELTON: I move that we approve the revisions to the COVID-19 Impact Policy.

MEMBER GANJAM: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Got a motion and a second.

A roll call vote.

Lea Crusey?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim Sandman?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam?

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: I have Saba Bireda's proxy. I vote to approve as well. So, that's another aye, and then, an aye from myself.

The motion passes.
Erin and Team, thank you, for all the work on that.

MS. KUPFERBERG: Thank you very much.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. So, then, next up is our Consent Calendar.

Before I ask for a motion there, would any Board member like to remove the item from the calendar for further discussion or state a recusal with respect to any item there for the record?

MEMBER SHELTON: I have recusals for, I believe it's just one of the items, for KIPP, KIPP DC.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. So, there's a recusal on that item. Perfect.

So, for the record, Naomi Shelton recused on KIPP.

And I'll take a motion on the Consent Calendar.

MEMBER GANJAM: I move to approve all items on the Consent Calendar.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Second.
CHAIR CRUZ: All right. I've got a motion and a second.

I'll do a roll call vote.

Lea Crusey?

(No audible response.)

Was that an aye, Lea? Sorry.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay, aye. Thank you.

Naomi Shelton?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim Sandman?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam?

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

We have an aye from Saba Bireda as well and her proxy, and an aye from myself.

All right. So, the Consent Calendar passes.

I'm trying to remember. We now do a separate vote, Dr. Walker-Davis, on the KIPP item, that's correct? Yes, I believe we do.
So, just to make sure that we've got all that covered, can I get a motion to approve the KIPP-DC-related item in the Consent Calendar?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: I move to approve --

CHAIR CRUZ: Oh, late-breaking update from our General Counsel. The KIPP is no longer in the Consent Calendar.

(Laughter.)

So, Naomi Shelton, thank you.

So, never mind. We do not need to pull that out.

All right then. So, the Consent Calendar is approved as is.

And any new business at this point in the evening?

(No response.)

Shockingly, none.

All right. Then, I will take a motion to adjourn.

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to adjourn the July 19th, 2021 Board meeting.
CHAIR CRUZ: Can I get a second?

MEMBER GANJAM: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. A motion and a second.

I'll do a roll call vote.

Jim Sandman?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam?

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: And aye from me and an aye from Saba Bireda as well.

Thank you, Board Members. Enjoy the rest of July, and we'll see you later this summer.

Thanks.

(Whereupon, at 8:54 p.m., the public meeting was adjourned.)
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Public Hearing and Public Meeting

Before: DCPCSB

Date: 07-19-21

Place: teleconference

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

[Signature]

Court Reporter