

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you, Dr. Bemoll. I just want to give a shout-out to our state Board of Education who sets the standards for the 11th grade test. So I think that's great feedback that could be shared easily with the state board as well. All right. I'm now seeking a motion, colleagues. Trustee Guzmán?

Trustee Guzmán:

Did you want to?

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Okay. Thank you.

Trustee Guzmán:

Thank you, President Garcia Morales. I would like to make a motion to accept the focus 2024 strategic plan update on student achievement.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you, Trustee Guzmán. Trustee Bustamante Adams?

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you, Madam President. I will second that motion.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you, Trustee Bustamante Adams. Colleagues, we have a motion by Trustee Guzmán, a second by Trustee Bustamante Adams. Please cast your vote. Thank you, colleagues. That motion passes 6-0. Thank you, everyone. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for your work.

4.01 Opening of Sealed Bids, Call for Oral Bids, and Resolution of Acceptance of Bid Offers to Sell Real Property Site #013 - Clayton Street and West Evans Avenue.

Discussion and possible action on the opening of sealed bids, calling for oral bids, accepting the highest bid and adopting a resolution declaring the highest bid to sell a 1.45 acre parcel of land located at the southeast corner of Clayton Street and West Evans Avenue, North Las Vegas, Nevada, 89032, Assessor's Parcel Number 139-16-310-001, and for the Interim Superintendent of Schools, Clark County School District, and the President and Clerk, Clark County School District Board of Trustees, to sign the resolution, is recommended. (For Possible Action) [Contact Person: Brandon McLaughlin] (Ref. 4.01)

Motion to accept the bid of \$265000.00 made by Vibranium LLC for the property on Clayton Street and West Evans Avenue.

Motion: Guzmán Second: Barron Vote: Unanimous

Final Resolution: Motion passed

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Do we have the sealed bids? Or will those be shared with me once we open the item? Okay. Got it. Okay. All right, ladies and gentlemen. We're going to move on. This is item 4.01. This is an action item. So if anybody has not had a chance... There's somebody in the audience who would like to provide public comment on this item and has not had a chance to do so, please submit your yellow public speaker card. Currently, do not have anyone who signed up for public comment on this item. All right. We are officially opening item 4.01, the opening of sealed bids, call for oral bids and resolution of acceptance of bid offers to sell real property site number 013 Clayton Street and West Evans Avenue. I'm going to turn it over to...

Trustee Guzmán:

There is [inaudible 01:50:54].

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Give me one second while we... Okay. It looks like we have one public comment, but we will do that... At what point do we do that? We should probably do that after we've... Brandon, before the sealed bids are opened?

Brandon McLaughlin:

Right after.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Right after? Okay. Thank you for that. Brandon McLaughlin? McLaughlin?

Brandon McLaughlin:

Yes.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Come on down.

Brandon McLaughlin:

Brandon McLaughlin for the record. I would recommend that Mr. Caruso's recommendation. I would say take public comment after opening, but before action's taken.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Okay. Perfect. All right. We're going to go ahead and before public action. Got it. So colleagues, please remind me to do that. We're going to move forward with the item. We can turn it over to Brandon. Brandon, turn it over to you.

Brandon McLaughlin:

Madam President, members of the board, Interim Superintendent, Larsen-Mitchell, Brandon McLaughlin, assistant superintendent, Construction and Development Division for the record. On July 11th, 2024, the board approved appraisal report for the subject property. On August 22nd, the board also approved a resolution of intent to sell the very same property. So Mr. Dingle here will present the following sealed bids for the sale of real property site number 013 at Clayton Street and West Evans Avenue.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you very much. Okay. At this time, we will open each individual bid envelope. For process' sake, colleagues, I will state the name of the bidder and the amount of the bid. Okay. Okay. We are... All right. This is why I have glasses. We have... The first bid is from Vibranium, LLC for \$265,000. Okay. The first bid. Second bid. It's violent. Okay. Okay. Second bid. Mitchell Thorman. Thorman. Mitchell Thorman for \$50,000. Okay. So we've got two written bids.

Chris Dingle:

Madam President, members of the board, Interim Superintendent, Larsen-Mitchell, Chris Dingle, Real Property Management, for the record. The highest bid is \$265,000 from Vibranium, LLC.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Excellent. Thank you. At this time, we'll now take oral bids. Oral bids must exceed the current highest bid by 5% or more. If there's anyone wishing to make an oral bid, please do so now. Chris, will you give us the amount?

Chris Dingle:

President Garcia Morales, members of the board, Interim Superintendent, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, that amount would be \$278,250.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Okay. All right. Are there any members of the audience who would like to provide oral bids? Can we do going once? Going twice? No oral bids. Okay. Let's see. Oh. Yes. Before we take action, let's go ahead and take public comment by Mr. Gomez II. Come on down please.

David Gomez:

Oh, sorry. Hold on. Yeah. It's the medias. There we go. David Gomez for the record, Nevada Peace Alliance president. I wanted to talk about these bids. I was actually going to do a bid orally here, but I'm not doing it for that. I believe that the property is worth a lot more than that. After evaluating the property and looking at where it's at in the corner that it's on, it's right next to Bigelow and some other buildings over there, a church. But nevertheless, this wasn't really opened in a real constructive way to allow many people to make an opportunity to bid. And if it was open in that way, I didn't find it. I didn't see it. And I didn't see anyone...I didn't see it anywhere. I go to libraries. I go to different places and I look around to see what I can find out and see if things are posted there.

So it's almost like we have a person that's bidding on it, Vibranium, and somehow they're the only highest bidder on there for whatever reason. I don't know. I will find out later because I know how to look at things and evaluate stuff. But I'm telling you right now that we're in a budget deficit and we're selling a land that's way over \$800,000 for 260-something thousand dollars. That doesn't equate with me really well, unless there's something wrong with the land. There's no utilities. There's no hookups. There's nothing close to it that obviously they're going to have to start digging and doing other things, which they can't do in North Las Vegas.

So I just think that the way you guys construct this and put this together was not consistent with allowing real bidders to come in and make a real bid, because what I see in here are suits. And most of the times I see suits in here, they're administrators or people that work for the school district. I don't see people in here

David Gomez:

that are mainly parents unless they have an agenda or a topic. And obviously, I don't see no bidders in here. So this is an open for bid, but obviously it wasn't publicized the correct way. Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

All right, colleagues. At this time, I'm seeking a motion. And Trustee Guzmán has language that we need to use for that. Trustee Barron, do you have a question?

Trustee Barron:

Yeah.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Okay. Let me turn your mic on. Go ahead.

Trustee Barron:

Thank you very much. Just to clarify, a couple of concerns. Staff, would someone please... I know there's a fair market value assessment on this property. Can you please speak to that first? And the second question would be where this information was published. I mean, advertising the sale of the land.

Brandon McLaughlin:

Madam President, members of the board, Interim Superintendent, Larsen-Mitchell, Brandon McLaughlin, assistant superintendent for the record. Trustee Barron, I can start out and my colleague, Mr. Dingle, can follow up with some of the more particulars. There is a very prescriptive process by Nevada Revised Statutes of how we dispose of district property separate and apart from other municipalities disposing of similar properties. So there is a different stream of it. I'm confident that our team in working with general counsel has followed all parameters of the Nevada Revised Statutes for advertising and conducting all of the bid process. So I'll let Mr. Dingle elaborate on how we advertised it.

Chris Dingle:

Madam President, members of the board, Interim Superintendent, Larsen-Mitchell. Trustee Barron, yes, we actually had this property appraised four times by certified licensed appraisers, people that are licensed, and we averaged them out and that's how we came up with the \$260,000. And we trust that the appraisers that they're licensed and that they are doing their jobs correctly. We followed NRS. As Mr. McLaughlin stated, we advertise it in the review journal as we're required. We posted it in three different locations as required.

Trustee Barron:

Fantastic. And it's zoned... if I remember correctly, it's zoned commercial, correct?

Chris Dingle:

I'm not sure on that. That would be... It's in North Las Vegas. So a person would have to [inaudible 01:59:50] North Las Vegas.

Trustee Barron:

I'm pretty sure it's zoned commercial because it's on the side where Bigelow is. And to actually make it worth... I mean, commercial there is not going to worth. To actually make it worth something, you're going to have to go through a process to get it changed from commercial to residential, which incurs some costs and that's not a sure thing, quite frankly. So I think, I could be wrong, but I think staff's assessment on this one is probably pretty spot on. And if you need a motion, if any motion on this one, I'd be happy to comply or to follow up to second the motion.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. Hang tight for that. We're going to turn over to Trustee Guzmán, who has very exact language. You're welcome to get back on the queue and to second that, Trustee Barron. Trustee Guzmán?

Trustee Guzmán:

Thank you. President Garcia Morales. I make the motion to accept the bid of \$265,000 made by Vibranium, LLC for the vacant property at Clayton Street and West Evans Avenue. Do I have a second?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

That's you, Trustee Barron. Get back in the queue please. Thank you. All right. Here we go.

Trustee Barron:

So moved.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. Colleagues, we have a motion by Trustee Guzmán, a second by Trustee Barron. Please cast your vote. All right, colleagues. Thank you. That motion passes. Congratulations, Vibranium, LLC. Thank you very much, team. Appreciate you. Whoo-hoo. Let's do this. Let's go. Let's go. [foreign language 02:01:35]. What did [foreign language 02:01:38]... [foreign language 02:01:38] just came? Okay. [foreign language 02:01:40]. Anybody? All right. That's right. [foreign language 02:01:43]. Okay.

4.02 Budget Update.

Presentation and discussion regarding the Clark County School District's budget. [Contact Person: Brenda Larsen-Mitchell] (Reference material may be provided.)

Trustee Garcia Morales:

We're going to move on to item 4.02. That is a presentation and discussion regarding the Clark County School District budget. Colleagues, this is not an action item. We will not be taking public comment on this. However, after the presentation, we'll have a discussion. Incredibly grateful for your patience, colleagues. I'd like to acknowledge all of you for your patience as Dr. Larsen-Mitchell and her team collected all the facts to provide us most comprehensive insight into the budget and allow her and her team to do the really hard work of distilling what was needed to prepare for today's conversation. Dr. Larsen-Mitchell, I'll turn it over to you.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Thank you. Madam President, members of the Board for the record, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell. This evening we will be providing a budget update. Presenting with me includes interim chief financial officer, Bartholomew, and chief strategy officer, Kowal-Paul. Please know that this has been a collaborative effort involving many team members. And additional team members are here and available to assist and support.

These are the components of our presentation, focusing on the budget update. First a look at our annual budget development timeline. We want to share our journey of where we have been with the 2024-2025 fall school budget release and our preliminary conclusions of what we have learned. We will then share where we currently are with school budgets and the central budget. We will close out our presentation with short-term and long-term solutions and the anticipated supports and assistance.

This timeline represents our annual budget development timeline, including the district's budget and school budgets. So you'll see in the timeline in the middle, we've represented the end of the school year, May, start of the school year in August. The information provided below the timeline includes the development of the district's budget. So looking at March and April, we have that district tentative budget development and approval, April-May, district final budget development approval, and then November-December, the district amended final budget development approval. At the same time, our central budget team is doing some school budget forecasting that's starting now to prepare for our January budgets for schools.

So then if we look at the top of the timeline, you'll see school budgets. So you'll see in January, we provide preliminary allocations based on projected enrollment provided to schools as is required by law on or before January 15th. In February, principals submit their spring school budgets, schools start to hire staff and prepare for the upcoming school year. You'll then see in September where we adjust allocations based on staffing count day provided to schools. So that's where we are right now. And that is required by law by November 1st. Schools adjust. They look at their budget. They adjust budget and staffing. And then we have the surplus process in October.

During this section of the presentation, I will share our collaborative work with the 2024-2025 fall strategic budget release. As the team started its regularly scheduled accounting year end closeout process, there were swings in the central budget and we sought input from a group of district leaders and principals to gain feedback on options in the event of a potential central budget deficit. Based on this collaboration with principals, we decided to delay the release of school budgets to gain a better understanding on the central budget analysis and reconciliation. We also took a proactive measure to convert existing expenditures to make available general fund dollars. We communicated the delay of the release of school budgets by one week to attempt to complete central budget analysis and reconciliation.

Approximately a week later, which is represented there by September 12th, we met with the group of district leaders and the group of principals again and we were unable to confirm or deny if a central budget deficit existed. We also learned on September 12th, 2024 that the average salary cost of positions was under-projected in January, 2024 for school budgets. Based on this collaboration, we decided to release school budgets based on the information we currently had at the time, avoid any potential central budget deficit impact on schools, and preserve available general fund dollars to support schools severely impacted if necessary. We communicated a potential central budget deficit, new timeline for school budget approvals and provided additional guidance for schools on September 13th, 2024.

On September 15th, 2024, principal supervisors reviewed the school budgets of the school severely impacted and identified an anomaly with the allocation of at-risk funding for schools. Based on further analysis, it was determined that inaccurate data was used for the at-risk funding for schools. Therefore, we recalculated school budgets on September 16th and then released school budgets to principals. On September 17th, 2024, it was discovered that payroll data for positions with actual salaries did not include

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

the 8% increase in pay for licensed professionals and salary increases for column advancements were not included in the average salary cost. Therefore, the system was updated to include the correct actual salary. On September 20th, I facilitated optional principal meetings to share additional context regarding the fall strategic budget 24-25. A request was made for the names of licensed professionals who had applied for the professional growth system advancement, and that information was shared with principals.

In regards to the 2024-2025 fall school budgets, we have identified primary issues. Schools must receive their school budgets for the upcoming school year on or before January 15th. Therefore, projections are made for schools to allocate their budgets, including projected student enrollment. However, it was discovered that the data for which students were found to be eligible for at-risk funding was developed using free and reduced lunch eligibility rather than the grad score. This inaccuracy was corrected for the 24-25 fall school budgets. In addition, we lacked timely communication with principals. The average unit cost for each type of employee employed to work in the district was provided in the January 2024 school budgets based on the information available at the time. Based on additional information received after January 15th, 2024, the district's good faith calculation of the averages should have been amended to fully reflect salary increases required by the applicable collective bargaining agreements and memoranda of agreement.

A secondary issue is we lacked sufficient information to inform and reassure stakeholders, especially surrounding the potential central budget deficit as the regularly scheduled accounting year end closeout process typically concludes through mid-October. The preliminary root causes that we have identified as a team include insufficient process document and communication and the organizational and process silos.

Our current state. So looking at our current state, we have two separate challenges, the impact of January, 2024 to September, 2024 school budget adjustments, and a potential central budget deficit. Let's first take a look at the current state of our school budgets. All principals have submitted balanced school budgets. We are very appreciative of the work of our principals, educators and members of the school organizational teams. Supports were provided for principals, including budget training and one-on-one budget analyst support. We also had principals who volunteered to serve as principal mentors to help other principals with their budgets and principal supervisors also worked alongside principals to balance their budgets. Support was provided to some schools to help them financially balance their school budgets. And lastly, no school budgets were impacted by the potential central budget deficit.

Many schools eliminated vacant positions or reduced extra contractual hours, and some schools have eliminated filled positions. Employees in positions that were eliminated will participate in the surplus process aligned with the bargaining agreement. The surplus process does happen annually, typically as a result of enrollment changes. This is the fall employee surplus history for approximately the last 10 years. The average number for licensed professionals over the last 10 years is approximately 68, support professionals is approximately 36 and administrators is approximately five. For the current 2024-2025 fall surplus process, we have 37 licensed professionals, 45 support professionals and five administrators. At this time, Madam President, with your permission, I will transition the presentation to Ms. Bartholomew. Thank you.

Diane Bartholomew:

Good evening. Madam President, members of the board, Interim CFO Diane Bartholomew, for the record. Every year, during the fiscal year closeout process, we analyze the actual revenue and expenses across the district for the previous fiscal year, which, in turn, impacts the amended final budget for the current fiscal year. It is usual and expected to see adjustments in several areas as actuals and are compared to

Diane Bartholomew:

projections. In most years, the budget is able to absorb any of those differences without concern. This year, as part of the fiscal year '24 closeout process, we have realized some significant differences between what we budgeted and what we saw as actuals. Notable differences were in actual costs of litigation and unexpected cybersecurity expenses. As the fiscal year 2025 amended final budget work moves forward, we have a current estimate of a potential central budget deficit of approximately \$12 million. The amended final budget submission will include any necessary exceptions necessary to provide a balanced budget.

The district will make every effort to offset any potential central budget deficit by absorbing it centrally, including using the unassigned ending fund balance. Our next slide will provide more context on that. Policy 3110 requires that the district maintain an unassigned ending fund balance of 2% of total general fund revenue. The fiscal year 2025 amended final budget will be presented to the board for submission on December 12th, and that presentation will include any final recommendation regarding the ending fund balance. The next slide, our unassigned ending fund balance. This slide shows our unassigned ending fund balance history. Again, FY 2025 amended final budget is in progress. Estimates are preliminary, but a potential deficit would be estimated to be a very small percentage of the district's budget. If we do determine that it is necessary to adjust the ending fund balance at 12 million, it would result in an ending fund balance still above 4% of general revenue.

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

Madam President, members of the board... Thank you. Apologies. Kellie Kowal-Paul, Chief Strategy Officer, for the record. Dr. Larsen-Mitchell touched on most of the short-term solutions that we have been implementing. We provided support to schools with significant challenges balancing their individual school budgets. The budget analysts annually engage in a process where they meet one-on-one with principals. The principals speak very highly of that engagement, and they speak very highly of the support they receive by the budget analysts, so that a point to be celebrated there. Also, throughout these last six weeks, we've been meeting on an ongoing basis with a number of principals, primarily with the elected principal leaders and then also the principal representatives on the principal budget committee. And then finally, as Ms. Bartholomew stated, we have the opportunity to adjust the unassigned ending fund balance if necessary, to absorb any potential deficit that we see.

To address the root causes that Dr. Larsen-Mitchell discussed, we will be implementing a cross-functional process improvement cycle regarding the development of school strategic budgets. This is a tactic that we use regularly. It will allow us to address the issues that we've found regarding documentation, communication, and accountability of the budget development process, while also helping us break down the process and departmental silos as we collaborate together and develop shared responsibilities units across the district. The operational goal for that process improvement cycle is to prepare for the release of the '25-'26 strategic budgets in January of 2025. However, I am finding that the more long-term goal for me and expectation is that we will end up at a place where we have the best understanding of how taxpayer dollars are introduced into our system and allocated into schools. And I think that understanding will be to a point where we are able to communicate that with you all with members of the public, our community, and with legislators.

So, I think that we're going to end up in a really great position at the end of all this. Let me walk you through what this is going to look like as we move forward over the next couple of months. What you're looking at in the screen here is kind of a process map of the process improvement cycle we'll be engaging in. The red boxes indicate a point of status check. The green boxes indicate a reminder for us to communicate out with stakeholders and you. And then the blue text and arrows give us a clue of the work that we'll be

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

undertaking. You'll see we started last week with a review of this timeline itself. We started with principal leads, wanted to make sure we were thinking in a direction that felt correct to them. Also as the leaders in the work at the school level, we followed up that review with a review at executive leadership team, a review of this timeline.

Last week, we gathered existing documented information regarding timelines and processes, anything that's already documented regarding any piece of any process that impacts the development of school strategic budgets. So that would be budget development timelines, hiring timelines, anything that's connected. At the same time, we were meeting with principals, we were identifying known issues, things that would come up from principals, things that came up as we were reviewing what had happened. And we have started to maintain a list of unknown issues of yet unanswered questions and of recommendations. And so, this week, we are taking that information that we gathered and the list of issues, questions and recommendations, and building a complete end-to-end process map of every piece of the system from allocation to the district to allocation to schools. What we'll be able to do then is to attach each individual issue question or recommendation to a piece in the process so that as we're analyzing that piece, we will be able to see how any changes would impact the entire system.

So, we will have another week and a half or so to begin the work of analyzing those individual pieces. And the goal will be to get an initial recommendation to the extended leadership team on October 21st, the extended leadership team is the specific point of review that we chose because not only does it have a little bit broader representation of district leadership, but it also includes district-wide representation of principals. And so while we will include principals in the individual work that's represented in blue, as we work through the challenges step-by-step, we also wanted to make sure that the overall recommendations were reviewed with as diverse an impact of those involved in the process as possible. So we want to make sure that that review happens at extended leadership. It makes that first checkpoint really, really fast. But hopefully, we'll get to a point there where we have enough of a solid start and where we can allow the budget team to begin what I've called a soft launch.

What I mean is we recognize that the team is typically working now to begin the work to developing school budgets in January. And if possible, we would love to not delay that any further than we need to. If we do find in extended leadership that we need to slow it down a little bit, of course we will. After that meeting, we will respond to the discussions with that group and recommendations that come out of it. We'll have four weeks to further refine the process, tighten everything up. We will provide a final recommendation to that same extended leadership team. Assuming all goes well there and everybody believes we've kind of made the right decisions and made appropriate changes, then we will implement a formal launch at that point in November. And by formal launch, I don't mean open up school budgets, I mean begin the work to develop school budgets, or hopefully continue the work that started with the soft launch.

Throughout that work, with the advantage now of having this cross-functional group of leaders and principals involved in the development of the process, we will now have a greater understanding of what we need to be monitoring along the way, so that we can make sure that the decisions are being implemented as we thought they would and that are impacting the system the way we thought they would. And we will monitor that work weekly at executive leadership. You can see there we've got a green box that we will communicate the formal launch. We know we've got some significant interest in this work right now, so we want to make sure that we are keeping everybody informed along the way. So we will have four weeks to do the work of developing the school budgets with a target of December 20th for substantial completion. December 20th is the last school day before winter break.

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

What I mean by substantial completion is that all school budgets will be built. All documentation that we send to schools will be documented, all of the guidance will be written, and we will be able to spend the two weeks of winter break and the week and a half after winter break before January 15th to number one, test the allocation of school budgets. And number two, develop a summary of impact to schools. We know that some of the impact to school budgets that they're realizing now, although it is often publicly being attributed to the potential central budget deficit, that's really not the source of the challenges that the schools. The challenges are a difference in the expectation of what it would cost to pay for positions. And so, we anticipate that we will want to make sure schools are aware of how that might look for them in January as well.

And then finally, when we release the spring allocations to schools on January 15th, we conveniently have a couple of principal meetings where all principals attend or invited to attend anyway, and we will take advantage of those meetings. They will have access to their budgets at that time, and we will walk them through the release of their budgets. We will walk them through a detailed training about the budgets, including what we spoke to them about this today and yesterday, the development of a technical manual, which will allow them to take the information that's provided to them and really understand how each piece is calculated. So if anybody has a question, how did we calculate the average salaries, that will be included. My goal personally is to allow the principals to be able to take the information they have, guess at their allocation, guess at what everything's going to cost them, and get pretty dang close to what actually shows up in their school budgets.

Of course, at that point, we will communicate the release of school budgets, we will communicate the summary of school impacts, and then move forward. We are considering one major change with the release of spring budgets in January. Not yet fully contemplated yet, obviously, but the legal requirement for January 15th, by the way, which is a date that we asked to be put into the law. The legal requirement is that we provide schools with an estimate of their allocations for the next year and an estimate of the cost of salaries and services. The requirement is not that budgets are open and that schools build their budgets at that time. So we are considering adding an extra review opportunity where we provide principals with their detailed allocations. We provide them with the detailed estimates of costs, and we allow them to review before they're even able to start making budget changes, before they're required to meet with their SOTs.

So we will have an opportunity for those who have firsthand knowledge of what they think their budget should look like to go, "Wait, I think you guys missed something." And then we have an opportunity to pull it back and go, "Okay, cool, we got it." And then push it out really, really strongly and with confidence before they start building their budgets. We'll have to talk about what trade-offs we would be making by making that change, of course, but we'll examine that throughout. Throughout this work, we anticipate some assistance externally. We've got a broad kind of variety of inputs here, which I think is great. First, you will see an item following this item on the agenda, which is a request to work with the Council of the Great City Schools to receive some support from CFOs from across large urban school districts across the country. We do have some expertise across the state, but the expertise from a system that's similar to ours would be valuable to us as well.

Also, the governor has offered us two pieces of assistance. Number one has requested the expansion of the scope of an audit that has been going on for a year, the LCB audit, which we welcome. And then he has asked the committee on local government finance to give us some assistance as well. And we've been invited to come provide a presentation to them later this month. Finally, the Nevada Department of Education has offered assistance as well. The state superintendent offered us the assistance of some CFOs across the state, but also internally with her team. And I've been in contact with Megan Peterson on

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

her team, and we intend to start working together on what that support might look like in the coming days. Dr. Larsen-Mitchell?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, for the record, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell. Thank you. Just one clarification that I would like to add. Our interim chief financial officer was at the Interim finance Committee representing us this afternoon, and I did touch base with the budget team later this afternoon before I came over, and we are now at a 10.9 estimated potential central budget deficit.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. I suspect that concludes the presentation. Thank you for the update on the numbers. It sounds like the team has been working very, very hard to ensure that these numbers are as close and accurate as possible and clear in terms of where we are in the central budget deficit. Thank you, Dr. Larsen-Mitchell. Thank you, Ms. Bartholomew. Thank you, Ms. Kellie Kowal-Paul, Paul-Kowal. Darn, I messed that up. Can you pull on the record, please, and help assist her out?

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

Madam President, members of the board, Kellie Kowal-Paul, for the record.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you.

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

With appreciation. Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Absolutely. Thank you. Thank you. Colleagues, I'm now going to turn it over to you for questions. However, before I do that, I need to make one quick announcement. I'm aware that Vegas PBS, who is recording our meetings, has run into a glitch in terms of the video streaming. And so, individuals who are streaming the video... We're not able to see the presentation that we just had. However, that presentation is available on board docs and will also be updated later once the meeting is over and published in the following days. And the votes were not being shown on the video, but that information is also on board docs already. Live and in person. Here we go. All right, Trustee Brooks.

Trustee Brooks:

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you to Interim Superintendent and your team. It's clear that you put a lot of work in. I want to apologize. I know this is really a stressful time. And I think that you have inherited a lot of negativity and abuse that really wasn't warranted. I think you've done a great job of trying to work through what the situation is. The first budget cut that I had on this board, I think we had \$12 million or something in ending fund. So we've come a long way, and I think maybe some of this negativity is from the PTSD that this community has from very, very deep cuts. I feel the district has been purposeful in making sure that we had a larger ending fund balance than we had previously. I think there's also just a challenge in general.

Trustee Brooks:

People want immediate answers. And unfortunately, if the district would have presented on the 26th, they would've been incorrect, and you would've had a really hard time walking that back and explaining the nuance that you were still learning information. So I think it's really important. I understand the public wants answers, but they want correct answers. And if you give them incorrect answers, you're going to have a hard time getting them to believe correct answers later. So I appreciate everyone is in a rush for this, but I think accuracy is more important than just making sure you put some information out there that might not be correct. I want to touch on the 4% ending fund balance. I know there's an NRS that triggers a taxation review that's at 4%.

Diane Bartholomew:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Brooks. Thank you for the question. I don't remember the number of the NRS. I won't quote it.

Trustee Brooks:

It's okay. Just the percentage. It's fine.

Diane Bartholomew:

Yes, it's our policy is the 2%, and then I think the 4% is that NRS.

Trustee Brooks:

Okay. So the NRS is, it's a 4% threshold before the Department of Taxation considers it a notice of a concern. And the plan for the district is to stay above the 4% ending fund balance.

Diane Bartholomew:

Right.

Trustee Brooks:

Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that. I'm probably out of time, so I'm going to yield to someone else. Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Nice work. Thank you, Trustee Brooks. Trustee Johnson?

Trustee Johnson:

All right. Thanks a lot. And I love to dig into the finances of it all. I know these are really big numbers, but at the end of the day, numbers are still numbers. And so, it's really helpful for me to hear you all share so clearly what the challenges were and then really break them out into the categories, district challenge versus school challenge. And just one of the things that I was trying to make sense of is, just for clarity, when you submit this budget in January, it's more of a forecast. And then when we review in the fall, it's a bit of a true up to the forecast. Is that correct?

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

increase in the cost of materials would be. So if you were building a budget based on a \$10 book, and then once you got to fall and realized the books were \$15, that's the same as what happened. They built a budget with positions they thought cost one amount and then came back to the fall with positions, by the way, which they had already staffed in most cases, which is the biggest challenge, the biggest part of the challenge in all this. But those positions that they already budgeted, already filled, already have kids in front of cost more than that.

Trustee Guzmán:

So, my follow-up is, when we're thinking about that and they were supposed to appeal if their budget was in a deficit, talk to me about that appeal process. And let's say, a school that budgeted for a certain amount got less, but they had carry forward, would they have received money if they said that they had a financial shortfall?

Melissa Gutierrez:

Madam President, members of the board, Melissa Gutierrez for the record. Trustee Guzmán, all schools that were experiencing significant difficulties balancing their budget and requested additional support, received it.

Trustee Guzmán:

But they had to fill out the form, right?

Melissa Gutierrez:

They did need to request additional support. Yes.

Trustee Guzmán:

And the principals knew to do this from past experience?

Melissa Gutierrez:

Madam President, members of the board. Melissa Gutierrez for the record. Trustee Guzmán, yes, the appeal process has been in place for many years. It is also available to all school principals on our web-based training site. In addition to that, school supervisors made them aware of that information in case they did not know. I met with school supervisors myself, and that was one of the things that we discussed was the possibility of an appeal if schools needed it and requested it.

Trustee Guzmán:

Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you, Trustee Guzmán. Trustee Zamora, you're up.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you all for the presentation. One of my first questions is, I do appreciate the timeline and kind of the dates of when the communication started, but can I get clarification when the issue was actually discovered?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Zamora, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell for the record. We knew in spring due to salary increases, which our employees deserve, that we were going to be tight, including unanticipated expenses such as litigation and cybersecurity expenses.

And then as the team got in there to start the closeout process and year-end closeout, there were large swings and we weren't able to identify a number. I mean, it went from large in the negative to sometimes we were okay. And so we just were not able to define what that number was. And so that's why we met initially with that small group of principals to just talk about in the event of a potential central budget deficit, what might be some options. But we were aware that there was a potential central budget deficit and that things were going to be tight.

Trustee Zamora:

Okay. A follow up question. I know we had a presentation in your timeline. We did a presentation May, June ... April, May, time, where I think we're finalizing. Nothing was flagged there, so I'm assuming from your presentation, the flags came up after that presentation to the board?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Zamora, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell for the record. Yes, as the team went in and tried to reconcile, and that's where when we delayed school budgets by a week, the attempt was for the team to finish that reconciliation process, which typically runs through mid-October, right? So them trying to do that in a week was really a difficult ask. That's what the team definitely worked hard to try to do, but we're still in that process right now.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. How am I on time? Do I get one more question in there?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Yes, go for it. Yeah.

Trustee Zamora:

Okay. Page seven, preliminary root causes. Can you expand more on the organizational and process silos?

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Zamora, yeah, for example, the challenge where we receive or where we provided schools with an estimated average cost of positions before all of the CBAs were completed and MOAs were completed after that. We didn't have a process at the end of negotiating individual contracts or MOAs that would trigger a communication or an action on the budget team's side to

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

update the average cost of positions in the budget. Nor did we have a process that would trigger communication to principals about the update of that information.

So those are kind of the examples where we have a negotiations team doing a negotiations work. We have the budget team doing the budget work, but we had a lack of how those processes impact each other.

Trustee Zamora:

Got it. Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Great. Thank you, Trustee Zamora. Trustee Barron?

Trustee Barron:

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. So I am having a little bit of trouble trying to understand this. So the timeline, I think, is really troubling for me. I guess, we had the arbitration with the teachers bargaining group. That finished in December. That was a full month before the budgets were being constructed in January. And then, you're telling us that you had some clues that there might be some problems. I was just thinking, now I, of course, filed my paperwork for retirement, but had I stayed as a teacher, right, I knew I'd be due for an 8% jump here. But besides that, I might be also getting a column raise because as for CUs, I know I had a whole bunch of them that I wound up leaving on the table. And quite frankly, I know there are several people that I was working with, they're going to be getting CUs, would be kind natural that those would also have to be calculated.

So what I'm hearing is that you knew that there were going to be some issues, well, you suspected there was going to be some issues, but you didn't take a deep dive to figure out that that was actually going to be a problem coming up. I guess, over the city, we're talking about a city that ... our city was ... three weeks, we're actually shutting the doors here. I'm very, very conscious about ending fund balances and making payments work out and all this, right? I guess I'm trying to figure out why wasn't there an alarm raised when you had, hey, and again, from January to the end of the school year and then through the summer, we're talking about a lot of time here. And I think we have a pretty competent team, referring to you all here.

I do not understand how there were not any procedural checks. I'm not understanding how there weren't anything to trigger an alarm, something that would go, hey, someone who would go up to the interim superintendent, say, "Hey, Ms. Interim Superintendent, we might be having an issue here coming forward." That's a big question here, but I'm struggling to understand why there were no structural safeguards in place. Why there was nothing here that would raise an alarm, so we wouldn't have to be making these announcements that, "Hey, we're looking at \$50 million down here." And that was frightening.

And the panic that ... I think the panic cannot be understated. When we had, again, when I had someone calling me telling me that, "Oh, I sold my house in California, I can't go back. What am I supposed to do?" That was just one example with our own teachers and then having the parents and all this, it's quite ... So can you please speak to there not being some procedural safeguards in here?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

I will speak to two things before you jump in please. First of all, if there is panic or concern, as members, we have the responsibility to share directly with the superintendent those specific issues and concerns so that they can address them in a timely manner. And it's unfair to kind of bring up the panic about what, as

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Trustee Johnson shared earlier, the words and the language we use are absolutely essential and critical to the success of the organization.

We also are on the same team. We're on the same team. This is not an interrogation. And so I ask members moving forward, if you have questions of our team, that you use a respectful tone. Otherwise that will not ... were going to have problems.

Trustee Barron:

Are you going to deny my question?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

I'm not going to deny your question.

Trustee Barron:

Good. I'd like to hear the answer.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

I'd love to turn it over to the team to provide you and to illuminate all of us on your specific requests. Thank you.

Trustee Barron:

A lack of procedure, procedural safeguard.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Sure. Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Barron, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell for the record. This slide right here are the conclusions that we have discovered based on the journey that we have been. We've identified the preliminary root causes. I acknowledge your concern, I understand your concern, Trustee Barron, and we have to do better. We have identified the root causes of not having sufficient process documentation, communication, and protocols, and we will do better.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Okay. Let's see. Thank you for that, colleagues. Trustee Satory, you're up.

Trustee Satory:

Thank you. Question, so when you were speaking to how tight the budget is for this year and then some of the unanticipated costs like the litigation and cybersecurity. So my question is like, I'm sure there will be likely unanticipated expenses that could occur this school year, where do we stand on being able to handle those as they arise?

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Satory, part of the work that we will be doing to define how we implement all of the different decisions and calculations in the process will include how we make projections. And not only how we make sure that our projections are as accurate as possible, but also how

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

we share what the level of uncertainty is with those projections with principles, so that they can make smart decisions in their budgets as well, recognizing that projections are projections. So that'll be part of the process that will work out along the way.

Trustee Satory:

Okay, thank you. One follow up question as well. Since this wasn't visible on ... we were talking about going on Board Docs, is it possible particularly for school staff, for us to be able ... because I know there's so many questions regarding this, to be able to send it out or email it out to all staff so they don't have to go searching for it?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

It is available on Board Docs and anyone ... It's public available, so anybody who would like access to that information, it's already available on Board Docs, so thank you for uploading that to the system.

All right. Oh yeah. Let's see. Go ahead. Trustee, where would you go? Where are you, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan? Oh, here we go. The very bottom. Go ahead.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

So I'm going to pause. In honor of World Mental Health Day, I really think we need to acknowledge the amount of stress that many of our community and our personnel have been under because of this conversation and this situation. I don't think we need to minimize it and I think we need to be clear about ... and I'm going to get to some real talk having lived it as a former principal, and I'm glad that chapters close and I applaud our principals that were here.

I want to ask some very specific questions because community members have shared they had to make huge cuts. We just heard principals tell us that parts of their staff, 578,000 at one school, was cut from their budget. So that is harmful to students, that is harmful to the staff, that will have to take the burden of those resources. My question is this, I have two. You stated you were aware in the spring about the central budget deficit, but when were you made aware about the 8% salary issue?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan, so looking at the 8%, I'm thinking you're meaning the 5,700?

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Correct?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

That was on September 12th.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

That was the first time that you were made aware of that?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Of \$5,700. Yes.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

So then it would be an assumption that our former CFO did not make you aware that that was going to be the cost of the salary increases?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan, what I have learned in working alongside the budget team is that there was an estimation of 8%, this is my understanding, that there was an estimation of 8% put into the January, 2024 budgets thinking that that would be the total of negotiations. But we know that it went beyond ... meaning the 8% covered the total, but we know that it went beyond 8%. The salary increase alone was 8% and then there were also step advancements. That's my understanding.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

So that the public understands, those step advancements still have not been determined. So that could be an additional deficit for schools or cost to them.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell for the record, no, my understanding is that the step advancements are currently in the average salary. It's the column advancements due to the professional growth system that happened throughout the year is my understanding from what I have learned from recently supervising the Human Resources Division.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Thank you for that clarification, and I'll put myself back in the queue.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan. Trustee, let's see. Trustee Cavazos, I know you've gone already. Do you mind if I go over to colleagues who have not had a chance to jump in?

Trustee Cavazos:

Of course.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

I believe that's Trustee Zamora. You went. Okay. Trustee Brooks? Everyone's gone. Oh, thank you. I'm going to turn it back over to Trustee Cavazos. Oh, I'm okay. I'm okay for now. Go ahead. Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, Madam President. And kind of piggybacking on what Trustee Barron had asked and kind of going more in a positive direction here, is what checks and balances and accountability measures were in place when the errors were discovered? I know you talked to us about the silos and I think that that is a really salient point that you touched on. But what system did we have in place when these were discovered?

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Cavazos, there has been an insufficient level of checks and balances, specifically when it comes to in between departments and divisions in the district related to the strategic budget development.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay, so if I'm understanding you, and I just say Kellie K.P., so I don't get in trouble here. So basically we did have checks and balances, but you guys are saying that they were insufficient and that's what we're trying to correct right now?

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Cavazos, I can't speak to the specifics of your question really until we get into the deeper analysis.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay.

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

Thank you.

Trustee Cavazos:

I appreciate that. Thank you. Second, quick question. Since we've talked a lot about the two categories of unanticipated amounts in litigation and cybersecurity, what amount of funds were allocated in those two categories and how far over did we go?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Cavazos, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell for the record. My understanding is that we budgeted 30 million for litigation and we were over by approximately 23. I know that Fort Net was approximately 14.9 million was the cybersecurity. I don't know, Trustee Cavazos, how much we had budgeted for that because that was due to the challenges we had, I think, the previous school year.

Trustee Cavazos:

Could we possibly get that in the future? We will catch up on that. And just lastly, are we anticipating any central office surpluses at this time?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Cavazos, I'll ask Chief Human Resources Triana to answer that question. Thank you.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay, thank you.

RoAnn Triana:

Madam President, members of the board, Interim Superintendent Dr. Larsen-Mitchell, RoAnn Triana for the record. At this time, there are no surplussed central office staff at this time.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay, thank you so much. That's all I have right now. Thank you very much.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you Trustee Cavazos. I'm going to go down the queue here. Trustee Zamora?

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Madam President. I do want to take a moment because I don't want it to feel like an interrogation. I understand we're in the same team, but I do appreciate, Interim Superintendent Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, you have always made me specifically feel that I can have a dialogue with you when it comes to asking these questions. And the team as well has been really good at that. We're just dialoguing, right?

There's a lot of talk in the community, there's a lot ... there was fear and I saw it all. So I kind of want to see what happened for it to be to the point where our principals are cutting homework packets and cutting all these ... we don't have ink, they can't print out these things or anything. But on page nine, you have, "No school budgets were impacted by the potential central budget deficit." So I kind of want to clarify that, because I have seen a shift of homework packets specifically in our elementary school. I don't really know about high school, but it's just what we've seen. So where's the miscommunication or what's going on there?

Melissa Gutierrez:

Madam President, members of the board, Melissa Gutierrez for the record. Trustee Zamora, all schools balance budgets with funding in their general supplies line item. Any decisions to purchase general supplies or what general supplies they do purchase, are made at the school level, but all schools balanced and closed budget with funding for general supplies.

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

Madam President, with your permission, members of the board, Trustee Zamora, I think it's important to clarify that statement that the school budgets weren't impacted by the central office deficit at the same time we talk about some of the things that schools are experiencing, and so I don't want to let that go away. The central office deficit did not ... potential central office deficit did not in any way impact what was allocated to schools nor what it is costing schools to purchase positions or services. Plain and simple.

What they are experiencing is a result of the incorrect allocation of at-risk funds in the spring. So they, in some cases, schools budgeted for an amount of money that they should not have been allocated. So they were, in some cases, over-allocated in January. That number was trued up in the fall. So they're experiencing that as a budget cut, for sure, but the reality is those dollars should not have been allocated to them in the first place. And so how they are choosing to make those adjustments is what Ms. Gutierrez said, that is up to the principal and the SOT.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. I really appreciate that because I think that's really important to clarify the things. There is confusion, right? We're having this conversation. It's very high level conversations and we want to just make sure everyone knows. But I do have a followup for that one. Do you know how many Title 1 schools were affected by the budget shortfall?

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Zamora, Kellie Kowal-Paul for the record. I don't have that number off the top of my head. Title 1 schools are like three quarters of the district though, so.

Trustee Zamora:

Yeah.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. Thank you, Trustee Zamora. I'm going to turn it over to Trustee Guzmán.

Trustee Guzmán:

Thank you. I have to just turn on my timer. So, some constituents are still confused and they asked me just really quick to ask you this question. How was the free and reduced lunch accounted for if schools received free meals and families did not apply for free or reduced lunch and where does that number come from? This is a very big deal for some reason.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, I'm going to call on Mr. Casey.

Trustee Guzmán:

Fabulous. He's coming. Obviously, we're calling in the troops.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Go team.

Trustee Guzmán:

That's right. Thank you so much.

Mike Casey:

Madam President, members of the board. Interim Superintendent Brenda Larsen-Mitchell Mike Casey for the record. Again, just to clarify, in terms of that metric being used for the January projection, that was indeed used and it was used in prior budgets, but again, the grad score is the appropriate metric to use going forward. But in terms of the FRL, that is based on a categorical qualification. So essentially, kind of looks at certain factors and makes that calculation and then apply a factor of 1.6 to account for if there was an additional application taking. We don't take applications currently because we are a hundred percent CEP, meaning community eligibility. So that is no longer a process, but they do apply a factor. So as of January, the district was approximately a 80% FRL based on that calculation.

Trustee Guzmán:

Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. Trustee Barron?

Trustee Barron:

Thank you so very much. Two questions. When was the last AB469 subcommittee meeting, which I'm not sure if this is going to have a bearing on it, but when there was a response to this, as I understand there was a promise that there would be ... that the district would be absorbing the central office or maybe I heard that incorrectly. But when we say that there are going to be, are there any central office cuts? Were these schools left to make these cuts themselves as per each building, or were there any central office cuts to help make up the shortfall? For the record.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Barron, can you help me understand the AB469 in relation to that question please, just so I can try to answer?

Trustee Barron:

No, it's just a question that I have regarding AB469, the subcommittee. I'm wondering when the last time we had one of those meetings. I know it doesn't seem like it kind of fits here, but I think down the road it might. And number two, were there actually any central office cuts to help the schools make up the shortfalls?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Trustee Guzmán who actually served on the committee, the subcommittee, regarding AB469.

Trustee Guzmán:

Thank you. Thank you for bringing up my PTSD. I appreciate it. So the AB469 subcommittee last met, that was your question, probably two years ago. And we met and ensured compliance by the district. And so this was not part of the compliance discussion because it didn't fall under the AB469. That's something that I ask the superintendent over and over again, is that the principals are receiving their budgets. What happens in central office, they have a list of things that they have to cover. And that list is what Dr. Larsen-Mitchell is going to have to take a look at and see if we'll have any cuts to. Is that correct? And that's based on AB469.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you, Trustee Guzmán.

Trustee Barron:

So for the record, there were no central office cuts?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

I think that's been repeated on several occasions already. There are none. Okay, we're going to turn it over to Trustee Brooks.

Trustee Brooks:

Thank you, Madam President. I promise to not ask you about central cuts. I have a question about the allocation on strategic budgets. Did we meet the threshold for compliance for AB469 for pushing that into strategic budgets?

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Brooks, yes, we did.

Trustee Brooks:

Thank you for that clarification. How much money, and I don't know if you know this off at the top of your head, how much money was in existence in carryover funds at the school level when schools determined this was a problem and needed to figure out a financial solution?

Diane Bartholomew:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Brooks, Diane Bartholomew for the record, I happen to have that information. Loaded in the fall, strategic budgets was 363 million in carryover.

Trustee Brooks:

Okay, so there were some schools clearly that didn't have a lot of money, but then there were some schools who had a lot of money. I think it's very important that people understand that's the purpose of the carryover funds. If you do get into a financial bind, you need to be able to cover it.

My last question is about the FRL versus grad score. I just on a call with ND two weeks ago, and they don't actually know what the grad score is for that bottom 20% for this fiscal year. It's October. So how do you determine in January how to allocate that money?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Going to phone a friend? [inaudible 03:12:58]. You all remember that show?

Greg Manzi:

Madam President, members of the board, Interim Superintendent Larsen-Mitchell, Trustee Brooks, that is one of the pieces that we are going to have to take through our process improvement to understand how we can work with that projection, knowing that it only is calculated for students that are actively enrolled in the current school year that are in grades K through 12.

Trustee Brooks:

Okay. I'm definitely interested in learning how you're going to get your crystal ball out and figure that out. It's going to need some creative thinking, but I look forward to seeing how you address it. Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Hey, thanks for lifting that up, Trustee Brooks, and really appreciate some of the domino effects. What I saw is the domino effects of what the gaps are from opportunities really from the state level to help us and support us, ensuring that we are clear on what we need to do, understanding the constraints that exist at the state level at this time. Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan, you're up.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Thank you, Madam President. So thank you for the clarification. One of the issues you mentioned was the increase of the salary, which was not known at the time and it was much more than what was projected. You talked about the advancement on the column. I want to talk about the at-risk issue and the error. I have a specific question. It's a two-parter, maybe three.

I had to write this out because I'm really looking at that and it's fascinating for me to study that. I think Trustee Brooks and I are like word or data wonks, Trustee Brooks, I believe. When the school funding is directly related to the at-risk weighted formulas is received from the state, do all of those funds flow to the schools or does it go to the school district? That's part one. So let's stop there and pause.

Diane Bartholomew:

Madam President, members of the board, Diane Bartholomew for the record. If I understand correctly, so we are allotted a bucket of at-risk when the legislation drops and then that is allocated based on our at-risk score, which it was FRL. The methodology changed, now it is grad score. So it's based on, so we do have a waterfall, right? Special ed, EL, at-risk gate. So depending on where your enrollment falls, it's going to depend on what allocation they get.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

But does it go to the schools or does it go to the district?

Diane Bartholomew:

It goes to the schools. It's allocated to the schools.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Okay. So no percentages was withheld from the schools. It goes directly to their strategic budget?

Diane Bartholomew:

Correct. Correct.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Okay. So they get it directly. And so when that happens in the spring, they're going to also see that amount of money directly in their strategic budget.

Diane Bartholomew:

Correct.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:
Thank you for that clarification.

Diane Bartholomew:
Thank you, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan. We're going to turn it over to Trustee Cavazos.

Trustee Cavazos:
Thank you, Madam President. And thank you again to one of my colleagues, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan again for asking that first part of my question. So I can just go on to the second part. So I believe I got that part. I just ... will we be able to know, and I have kind of talked with Interim Superintendent Brenda Larsen-Mitchell with us briefly on our one-on-ones, will we be able to kind of get an idea or to know the specifics of which schools got an increase in at-risk money and was that amount, was it a proportion to the money that was cut from other schools? Will we be able to kind of get an idea or a report on that?

Diane Bartholomew:
Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Cavazos, Diane Bartholomew for the record. Correct. So when we get our bucket of at-risk dollars, yes, depending on the enrollment at a particular school, that's what they're going to get allocated. So yes, if money comes from somewhere else, it's going to go ... it goes to somewhere else.

Trustee Cavazos:
Okay. Thank you. And just a quick question that's not exactly a follow up. It's kind of follow up to my previous question and apologies to Trustee Brooks, but it does mention the phrase "central office." Would technology positions be counted those that were surplus, would they be counted as central office positions?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:
Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Cavazos, are you meaning site-based technicians at the schools?

Trustee Cavazos:
I don't know ...

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:
... these technicians at the schools?

Trustee Cavazos:
I don't know their exact department. I know that it was a question that was asked of me early today and I was not able to get back to the constituent, but my understanding was that, they were not site-based.

Trustee Garcia Morales:
I think that's a really great question to follow up, there's something in writing that you can send to Dr. Larsen-Mitchell, so that she could do some follow-up to support your question.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Thank you for your assistance, Madam President, thank you Interim Superintendent Dr. Larsen-Mitchell I will look forward to being able to kind of dig down and I will be glad to do a follow-up with the person who asked, so that you can have more information on that inquiry. Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. All right. Trustee Zamora.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you Madam President. I only have two more questions. Because I was going down the presentation. So on page 15 we're talking about the extended leadership team and we're talking about principals. It's the... There you go. How are we choosing the principals that are participating in this?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Zamora, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell for the record. So every year we have principals participate in extended leadership. We meet once a month. They're selected based on region, transformation network and we have high school representation, middle and elementary.

Trustee Zamora:

Very diverse. Perfect. Thank you. Last question, I just need clarification. The deficit amount of 10.9 million was determined before or after school budgets made their cuts?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Zamora. The 10.9 was learned this afternoon.

Trustee Zamora:

After.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Yes.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. That's it. Yay.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. Trustee Zamora. Trustee Barron?

Trustee Barron:

Thank you very much. Actually, my question kind of follows Trustee Zamora's. At first we were given, we were informed of a very large number that was quite alarming. Then it then got revised to 20 million and then, 12 I think, and then 10. I don't understand quite exactly how it keeps on getting revised. Was there a new calculation? Were we learning more about what the deficit actually was? Can you please speak to that?

Diane Bartholomew:

Madam President, members of the board? Diane Bartholomew for the record. So remember, so amended final, we have a three-phase budget cycle, right? We do a tentative budget in April. We do a final budget in May, and then as we close out the prior year, we are waiting for those numbers to get done. So the amended final budget, which is why we do an amended final budget in December, because we're waiting for those finalized numbers to all come through and make sure that we've got everything covered. So I'm not sure if that answers your question.

Trustee Barron:

No, it really doesn't. No, it really doesn't. So does that mean that all of a sudden more money's going to wind up because it was unaccounted for by December?

Diane Bartholomew:

No, we... Diane Bartholomew, for the record, we are still in process, so we're still going through budgets. We are actually still trying to close out the school budgets. That's still a process. We are still finalizing FY-24, which you will get the financials at the November meeting. So once all those numbers come together, that's what becomes part of amended final budget in December.

Trustee Barron:

Thank you.

Diane Bartholomew:

That's the process.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you for explaining that process, to us over and over and over again. Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

The one thing I want to say about your check and balance is really important because I appreciate that you're going to include principals now ahead of time in the conversation prior to releasing, so that these mistakes can be prevented. Let's look to the future. People are really scared because the 8% hit this year. The 10%'s going to hit next.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

[inaudible 03:22:27].

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Nope. So let's talk about carryover. They've already dipped into their carryover. My question is, the state is only allowing a certain percentage for schools to carryover. What is that percentage that they're allowed to carryover and what is the amount of time that they can spend it down?

Diane Bartholomew:

Madam President, members of the board, Diane Bartholomew, for the record, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Yeah.

Diane Bartholomew:

It's SB-282. The amount is 5% over their available expenditures and they will have two years to spend those funds. And to my understanding, it's also a very limited list of what they can spend the funding on.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

So I'm just thinking about having those loops with the site building leaders is crucial now because of what next year's going to bring for them and because they've already dipped down into their carryover and their general supplies. So the money is going to be less and less and next year will be less. I'm just saying that... The flags have to be glaring because this fiscal cliff is hit and it's very concerning and that's the fear that people have and the stress that they're going through. So I appreciate you including them to have these conversations now because there's more to come, unfortunately. That's real talk.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you for the... Colleagues for those questions. I don't see anybody else in the queue. Is there anything else, Dr. Larsen-Mitchell?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board. No, I don't think there's anything additional.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you very much for that comprehensive overview and thank you for your work and especially helping us get that potential central deficit down to 10.9. Appreciate your commitment and your diligence, really, thank you. Thank you.

4.03 Council of Great City Schools Review of the Clark County School District's Finance Operations.

Discussion and possible action on approval to enter into a professional services agreement with the Council of the Great City Schools to review the Clark County School District's finance operations, for the total amount of \$50,000.00, is recommended. (For Possible Action) [Contact Person: Brenda Larsen-Mitchell] (Ref. 4.03)

Motion to accept item 4.03, the Council of the Great City Schools review of the Clark County School District's finance operations.

*Motion: Garcia Morales, Second: Brooks Vote: Yeses-3 (Brooks, Bustamante Adams, Garcia Morales); Noes-3 (Cavazos, Guzmán, Zamora)
Motion Failed.*

Motion to explore if existing funds with the Council can be reallocated to enter into this contract.

*Motion: Brooks Second: Bustamante Adams Vote: Yeses-3 (Brooks, Bustamante Adams, Garcia Morales); Noes-3 (Cavazos, Guzmán, Zamora)
Motion Failed.*

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Okay, colleagues, we're now going to move on to the next item, which is an action item. So we will be taking public comment on it. If you are... If you'd like to provide public comment on this item, please submit your yellow public speaker card. Otherwise, we will, once we begin the presentation, we will no longer accept yellow public speaker cards. All right, this item is 4.03, Council of Great City School's Review of the Clark County School, District's Finance Operations. Point of contact, as to colleagues, just as a reminder, once we turn this over to Dr. Larsen-Mitchell, to provide additional context for us, we will take public comment and then we will take action. Dr. Larsen-Mitchell please?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell. For the record. As we just presented, we are very grateful and appreciative to the support from the governor's office, from the Nevada Department of Education. We'd also like to work with the Council of Great City Schools as they represent diverse, large urban districts of which we are the fifth-largest diverse large urban district in the country. We want to get better. We want to determine what systems and structures we need to build and implement within budget and finance to do better to serve and support our schools and ultimately our students. So contracting with the council, it would be approximately four days working with some CFOs in other large urban districts across the country. They would conduct two days of interviews with customers and team members. On the third day they would present key findings and a high level report of findings. And then approximately eight weeks after their visit, they would provide a comprehensive report which would include commendations findings and operations, leadership and management and organizations. And then of course provide us with recommendations. Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Okay. Great. Thank you very much. All right, we're going to go ahead and begin with the individuals who signed up in advance. That's Dr. Bemoll. Followed by Vicki Kreidel and then Marie Neissess.

Public Hearing

Tiffanie Bemoll:

Good evening, Tiffanie Bemoll for the record. I will confess that I didn't really start paying attention to board meetings until I became a student council advisor and my counsel had to present at one. I would attend sporadically, watch occasionally, read the transcripts, but in reality, I was not that invested. Enter Trustee Ford and her dog, that whole thing just fascinated me and I was hooked. I was all in and drank the Kool-Aid of watching, chatting on the Facebook Lives and really just paying as much attention as I could to everything I could. I watched impassioned speeches during public comment. I sat through lots of dramatic tension and I watched and I listened. I remember when former Superintendent Jara was hired, and I vaguely remember bits and pieces of the trainings that were discussed during that time. Now going back and learning about certain facets from that time.

Tiffanie Bemoll:

I think it is a conflict of interest to bring in the Council of Great City Schools to review CCSD's Financial anything. These are the people who mentored Jara when he started here, who helped with board governance and how the board was supposed to review their one employee. Who are supposedly working with the board now on how to run the school district.

With all due respect to this organization, whose mission is to boost academic performance and narrow achievement gaps, improve professional development and strengthen leadership, governance and management, which is misspelled on their website, might not be what the governor or Nevada Board of Education had in mind when they asked for more transparency and what happened with the budget debacle. They're already offering you free help. I implore you to heavily consider this decision. And if you're going to spend this kind of money in a budget deficit, find a firm that has no ties to CCSD, who has nothing to gain. So there is no question as to what is actually going on. All people have asked for this whole time is transparency. This is not the right way to get that. It just looks like more of the same old, same old. Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Vicki?

Vicki Kreidel:

Good evening. My name is Vicki Kreidel and president of NEA of Southern Nevada and a teacher in Clark County School District. As we've just been hearing, we're in a budget deficit. Now is not the time to spend \$50,000 to hire Council of Great City Schools to look at our budget. You can't ask your schools to make sacrifices surplus people and cut programs and then throw money around on consultants that aren't absolutely necessary. We already have people coming in to investigate this budget deficit from the state. There just appears to be no good reason to hire Council of Great City Schools for this. And in fact, by doing so, you would be insulting your staff and decreasing the trust the community has in CCSD. Thank you.

Marie Neisess:

Good evening Trustees. Marie Neisess, CCA President. As I continue to hear about budget cuts from frontline educators, I am dumbfounded by the proposal to spend \$50,000 on hiring the Council of Great City Schools to preview CCSD's budget. Pouring money into an external consultant while SOTs had to make budget cuts, is nothing short of gross miscalculation of resources that 50,000 should be redirected to address the actual budget cuts.

Are there truly no qualified individuals within CCSD who can understand their budgetary needs and challenges? Furthermore, the decision to engage the Council of Great City Schools raises serious ethical concerns. Given the ties between CGCS, Trustee Brooks and the Interim Superintendent. Why would you entrust this critical assessment to them when there is a potential conflict of interest? Additionally, their projects eight weeks... Or their projection of eight weeks before they have any findings is far too late.

Budget cuts are impacting schools now. This is unacceptable. CCSD should be prioritizing direct collaboration with the governor, the Legislative Commission on school funding, and the Department of Education to ensure full transparency and to rebuild the trust that has been severely eroded. The public educator, students and legislators demand immediate answers. It's time to act decisively and transparently keeping all stakeholders informed at every step.

Marie Neisess:

And with all due respect, this is a growing crisis. With cuts to our after school programs, increasing class sizes by cutting positions. This looks exactly like a crisis. This budget is a crisis because the cuts have negatively impacted our most at risk students and frontline educators already. This crisis must be handled effectively without incurring further significant expenses. And I am sorry that I messed up on my speech, but I am so angered as a former educator who has taught at only Title One at risk schools. I understand the significance of cuts like this. So again, this is a crisis because our students who need those after school programs the most will not get those needs. They will not get the additional help. They will not get the additional tutoring due to this crisis. So with due respect, it is a crisis. Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Colleagues, that concludes public comment. Thank you. Okay, this time we're open to discussion and action. Trustee Guzmán.

Trustee Guzmán:

I thank you. I need to set my timer. Sorry guys. Wow. Okay. I have a couple of questions, because I think that the Council of Great City Schools has been misrepresented. I think they do, do good work, although I am very disappointed that they misspelled management on their website and we'll have to mention it to them. But I'm concerned because I don't think that the community understands what they're coming in to do.

I think it looks like they're coming in to audit us, but they're not, are they? They're coming in, from what I gathered from the information I have is that they're coming in to guide us. So I think that needs to kind of be explained a little bit. I think we need to understand what the council is doing. I know that, there's been, and also that it's going to be a CFO that doesn't know us, right? That's coming in to talk to us and have those conversations. They're from other districts, right? That are coming in to guide us that don't know us. So I think maybe some of that needs to be explained a little better.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Guzmán. For the record Brenda Larsen-Mitchell. So they would come in and conduct interviews with team members within budget and finance to learn more about our systems and structures and our processes that we currently have and ways that we can get better and improve. And yes, a team of CFOs, I don't know exactly the number, but from other large urban districts would come in and conduct that.

Trustee Guzmán:

Right. And they wouldn't know us. They have not had any experience with the Clark County School District. They haven't been CFOs in the Clark County School District. I mean, that's really important. I know that sounds funny and I am funny, but I'm telling you, this really does need to be expressed is that these people do not know us and they're going to give us feedback that we desperately need.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Guzmán. For the record, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell. I don't have the names of the CFOs who are coming, but I can't predict that any of them would've worked here before or anything of that nature.

Trustee Guzmán:

Okay. Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. Trustee Guzmán. Trustee Cavazos.

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you so much. I just got another message that our feed is still down on both EduVision and on YouTube, still. I was hoping that they were still working on it. Okay. So I want to say, I want to ask first of all, and I'll just say these kind of together. Did we look at any other option other than Council of Great City Schools?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Cavazos. Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, for the record. We also look at the support from the governor's office and from the Nevada Department of Education. And we thought that the council would be a great support as they represent diverse, large urban districts.

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you. Dr. Larsen-Mitchell. And yes, they have provided a great support. I'm going to focus in just on this item. Who would choose the staff that's mentioned in the description and on the reference materials? Who would choose the staff that would be participating in the four days of assessment?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board. Trustee Cavazos. Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, for the record. In the past when we've gone through this process, it's a collaborative effort with the council and us scheduling interviews with staff.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay, but what I mean, would it be, Ms. Kellie Kowal-Paul or would it be you or would it be Deputy Superintendent Melissa Gutierrez. Who would choose the staff to participate?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board. Trustee Cavazos. Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, for the record. We would definitely have input in who would be interviewed because we know the individuals who are critical to the work.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Thank you.

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you. And last thing, we have \$66,000 right now that's out maybe give or take a few hundred dollars. 60,000 that we paid for governance training and 6,000 for registration fees. 3000 each for one staff member and one trustee to attend a workshop. The workshop did not work out for various reasons I won't go into. So I think, I personally just want to say, I think to be transparent, to be above all concerns about objectivity. I think that it would probably be better if we look at something internal or somebody that is absolutely not connected. Because even though as Trustee Guzmán brought up that this would not be people that know us, they know us, they know us, they know you. They probably know me. They probably know most of the board. So because we've been intrinsically involved with them. So I understand that the intent of this item is really good. I really think it's really good. But I think we can do it without the Council of Great City Schools and spending another 50,000 when we already have 66,000 that we have not finished receiving the services for. Thank you so much.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you for that. I just want to point out that we made a commitment to pause that work, given that we had this little tiny thing called a superintendent search take place this year. So I just want to make sure that that's represented clearly. Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan, you're up next.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

So I wrote down the areas that we would seek for support. The committee on local government finance. So do we know specifically are those CFOs? Are those individuals that... What is their role, do you know?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, trustee Esparza-Stoffregan. We are to present to them on October 23rd. I'm not quite sure of the role after that piece.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

No.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

And I don't know the roles that they serve.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

I know but-

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Or that they represent.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

But I'm saying the support, because I'm talking about the slide that they would provide us some support with the situation. So was there expertise from that group that could potentially internally provide that service?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan. I don't know what that support will look like after we present on the 23rd.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

So what I'm saying and that's important, is I think we should wait for that, because after that presentation happens, maybe we can revisit this conversation because potentially internally, they could have some experts that could provide us some assistance rather than us putting out \$50,000.

Because that, when you look at it, that position is really a position for a support person. \$50,000 is what some of our support staff make in one year. So just the optics of that right now, I think we should hold off. And the other issue when I read through the contract is that they do the four-day interview, but then it takes them eight weeks to turn around the report to us. And I just don't find that that's going to be timely. So I think this can be tabled and maybe we can wait for that presentation and maybe I just couldn't support spending that money knowing that we're cutting positions.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

I'm not sure that they're... I'm confused.

Trustee Guzmán:

I thought they were being surplussed.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Yeah, there are no positions that are being cut, to be clear. Surplus is different. Surplus has existed. There are plenty of openings. I'd like to clarify just so that information is accurately represented and we are again on the same team. And if information needs to be shared, that's my responsibility. So I'm grateful for that opportunity to share. Trustee Barron, you're on next.

Trustee Barron:

Yeah. Thank you so very much. So I did some cursory background, look there on this council, but I don't see anything. I guess it says here, "The council works to advocate for policy initiatives that benefit urban students providing a platform." Anyhow, I don't see anything on here that they actually specialize on fiscal oversight. I'm sure that's part of what they do. And I'm sure they have fantastic CFOs that are linked to all this right?

But I don't see anything where anyone is necessarily deferring to them when they're looking at financial oversight or their organizations. This is the same board that when we were evaluating people to do some oversight, we had someone who was extremely qualified to do oversight, but we doubted that person's ability based upon that they weren't, "Qualified." And don't get me wrong, but again, we made a big deal about spending money on our superintendent search right? To expand more reach out into the community, right? I guess the question is, does this Council of the Great City Schools, do they have any particular expertise and what I would expect to be like a forensic audit that they would actually be able to, are they qualified to conduct a forensic audit and actually serve recommendations that we could actually... Because the governor says he's going to take a particular interest in what's happening here. And I sure would like to be on the same page as our governor.

Kellie Kowal-Paul:

Madam President, if I may, members of the board, Trustee Barron. Kellie Kowal-Paul, for the record. My personal experience with the Council for the Greater City Schools is the benefit is in their expertise in connecting representatives and leaders and staff of the large urban school districts, across the country. They also have staff on board who have expertise in a variety of areas. I don't know their org chart. I can't speak to that specifically. I have no idea if they're qualified to do a forensic audit. I don't think that's what we're asking to contract them for. What we are asking to contract for is to facilitate connecting us with existing CFOs who are currently serving in that role in other large urban school districts across the country.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, for the record. And if I may add on to that, we are very supportive and welcoming of the support of the governor. We are welcoming all support so we can get better. And it may be current CFOs in large urban districts. It may be retired CFOs from large urban districts, but it's experience large, diverse urban districts. So we're just looking at every avenue for us to do better.

Trustee Barron:

But we could actually save the... I mean if we're working through the governor's office. Couldn't we save the 50 grand and defer to what we want to do in a partnership with the governor's office?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Barron. I respect your opinion.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Let's allow the vote to make that determination. Trustee Barron, you're good. Trustee Zamora, you're next.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Madam President, can you remind me again? Did we reach out to a counsel or they reached out to us?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Zamora. Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, for the record. I did participate in the Casserly Institute with the council. So I spent a year maybe about with them in the Superintendents Academy. So when there was a struggle or a potential central budget deficit, a staff member just reached out to check in. But this was contracting with them. I reached out.

Trustee Zamora:

Okay. I know this was in our briefing and I had a question. I wanted to see if we were able to do a follow-up on that. I had asked if, similar to Trustee Cavazos's question, if we looked at outside resources, but I was also thinking of someone like NSBA, which is a National School Board Association and or NALFO who are focused in bigger things like us, right? NSBA does a lot of urban schools, they have CUBE. They're actually going to be here at the end of this month. So did they have any services? Did you all look into them?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Zamora. Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, for the record. No, we did not. But that's a great suggestion. Thank you.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. That was it.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Trustee Johnson?

Trustee Johnson:

Yeah. I wondering there a... Was this the only way that they would provide the services meaning could we have thought about, again, we put something on pause, could we leverage some of the debt, the credit that we already have with them to be able to expend it that way? Just if there are other ways that we can think about leveraging the services that don't add to the expense line, if that's at all possible?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Johnson. Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, for the record. Happy to look into that.

Trustee Johnson:

Perfect.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. And I want to make sure that I, forgive me colleagues. I failed to mention Mr. Caruso shared with me earlier that there are some delays on the sound lag and video on YouTube and on EduVision there's only sound. However, if individuals who are on EduVision move over to YouTube, they will be able to see and hear.

Right now, actually it sounds like there is some glitches that the team is working very diligently on addressing. Thank you for that in advance and from where we are right now with respect to EduVision sound being on as a source of information for members who would like to hear this meeting and are not present today, in this room. All right, I'm going to turn it over. Thank you for working through that challenge. Trustee Brooks, you're up next.

Trustee Brooks:

Thank you, Madam President. Just for clarification, I don't have any affiliation with the Council of Great City Schools. The district is a member of this member organization as are the largest urban districts in the nation. The support that the district is referencing is they have these things called strategic support teams. The way that it works is the council is kind of the convener, the facilitator, and they bring in experts in urban finance. And then those people come and they look under the hood. They are the people most able to look under the hood. While I absolutely appreciate any additional external support we're being offered. One of

Trustee Brooks:

my hobbies is reading the audits of other organizations in the state of Nevada. And the truth of the matter is, you're probably not going to find the same level of expertise that you're going to find by having external people who have direct experience in this role in urban districts who might know how to do things differently. I think it's really important that we are open to that experience, that we're willing to be vulnerable, that we're willing to have somebody come and potentially tell us we're not doing things correctly. I think it's definitely more valuable if those people have no strings attached to CCSD. The challenge is urban districts know each other, right? That's going to be a challenge. But I don't think they know each other more than, say, people who are at the Department of Education who worked at the district for a number of years. That's actually a much deeper connection that I think will not give you a clear lens to see something because maybe you don't know what you don't know. So I'm supportive, but I'm open to hearing feedback from the board on why they think it's problematic. I think investing \$50,000 to solve potential future budget issues, it's an understandable justifiable expense. Especially since we just did a supe search. We started at 70,000 and we're up to 160,000. So I think it's really about priorities here.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Trustee Cavazos, do you mind if I turn it over to Trustee Bustamante-Adams, who hasn't had a chance to jump in yet? All right, great. Thank you. Trustee Bustamante-Adams.

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you Madam President and thank you Interim Superintendent. I'm grateful for the suggestion and I'm grateful from our strategic officer that we're exploring this idea. For me I just want to share the information right from the governor's office, he's also under the Department of Taxation, which you talked about, the committee on local government finance. That's what it is. October 23rd, local government finance. That's their specialty. And it does have NASB representation, but they're Humboldt County, no disrespect, not our size, right? Lyon County, Smart, strategic, individual, not our size. And so for me, I'm willing to entertain the idea because I want other urban CFOs looking at what's under our hood. I want to have those best practices because as trustees we have three responsibilities, the budget, our priorities, and then the evaluation of the superintendent. That's it. And I can't say that I've given myself an A-Plus yet to understand the budget the way that I should and I want to. So thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. I know there are still some colleagues in the queue and going to turn it over to them in a second. However, I want to be able to make a motion, at least lay the motion on the floor. Colleagues, I'd like to make a motion to accept the Council of Great City School's review of the Clark County School Districts Finance Operations. Okay, so I'm going to turn it over to discussion and or seconds. Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Sorry, allergies. This is going to be discussion, not a second. So I don't know how Dr. Larsen-Mitchell would think of this suggestion, but she's open to suggestions. So I just had a good idea. Like my kids used to say it was usually in their favor. Council of Great City Schools conference is next week, correct? In Dallas, Texas. I'm not going, but I know that we have our three officers going. Plus I believe Trustee Johnson is going to be going. And I want to congratulate Interim Superintendent Brenda Larsen-Mitchell that I believe you have 11 presentations that were approved. Is that correct? 11?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Cavazos. At least 11.

Trustee Cavazos:

At least. Okay.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Yes. Thank you.

Trustee Cavazos:

And so you will be taking accompanying staff on this trip for those various... She knows where I'm going already, knows me too well. So you're going to be doing 11, at least, presentations, plus we have four trustees going. And actually Trustee Johnson gave me this idea, so I'm going to give him credit. So what could be done with four trustees? And I don't even know how many staff you're taking for at least 11 presentations, but that's phenomenal.

So, could anything be done as far as conferring with these folks? I know it wouldn't be in the formal structure of this, but there's a lot of money already that's being spent on the Council of Great City Schools next week. And so could anything be done within those parameters without spending an additional 50,000? Because I am really stuck on the one point that...

I know Kellie's going like, "Where do you expect us to have time to do this?" I know. What Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan had brought up and that's that they're going to spend four days here. We don't really know exactly which staff are going to... It's going to be collaborative, but it's going to be eight weeks before we get a report.

So anyway, I'm just going to throw that out there because I'm not going to ask you how many... I know necessary staff are ready to go, have their presentations ready. And I don't know what the cost of that is, but I just thought I'd throw it out there. Thank you.

Trustee Zamora:

I'll give some context for, because when I mentioned the amount of money we have spent on a climate culture report, there has been comments where it's like, "Oh, that's a pretty old report." And that was last year, May, 2023. How long do we think, if this passes, we can use their report back? What's that timeframe looking like? Would it be a yearly thing that you think would be happening or how long can we use it?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Zamora, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell for the record. I think that based on the recommendations, so they'll provide us with recommendations. So, based on the recommendations, we would begin developing and implementing them aligned with our systems and structures. So, it could be used for as we're building and doing better on the work. I don't know if I have a definitive timeline, but I can tell you with the review that we've done previously, we've had 10 recommendations and we just continue to work on those recommendations to do better.

Trustee Zamora:

And a follow up question, do you all know if they have done something like this with other school districts?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustees Zamora, based on the information, I would venture to believe that yes, they have done work like this before with other districts based on the contact that I've had with the individual who leads this operational piece.

Trustee Zamora:

I have an ask. Are we able to figure out with that other work they've done with other districts, if there's been follow up and if so, if there's been a cost to it? So for example, if they're coming in a year and kind of saying, we're just going to do a quick cleanup, is there a cost to that? And kind of seeing how much other districts have been spending money.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Zamora, we can look into that. I don't know if I misinterpreted your first question, if they would be coming in and doing follow-up. That's not part of this contract, so I apologize if I misunderstood.

Trustee Zamora:

No, it was two different questions. You're good. Thank you.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Okay, thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

All right, Trustee Brooks.

Trustee Brooks:

Thank you Madam President. Is there a motion on the floor that I can second?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

There is a motion to accept item 4.03.

Trustee Brooks:

Okay, I am going to second that motion. I am in support of external experts coming to help the district even if something negative comes out of it. I do think it's an opportunity for growth. And then just for the board's information, they have a list of publications online, probably like 60 pages of them. So this is the type of work that they do. Generally they come in, they give a list of suggestions. It's not really their duty to follow up because it's more like a management, operational review type thing. And then it's actually up to the district and the board to make sure that that's what they focus on. So I'm supportive and I'm seconding.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you Trustee Brooks. Colleagues, we have a motion on the floor by yours truly, second by Trustee Brooks. Please cast your vote. Okay. Colleagues, that motion does not pass. It is a three to three. I will entertain another motion if there is one on the floor. Otherwise, Trustee Guzmán?

Trustee Guzmán:

Thank you President Garcia-Morales. I'd like to put a motion on the floor that Dr. Larsen-Mitchell brings back or... That we direct the superintendent to bring back other companies that do this for us so that we can do a comparison shop, because we are with the National School Boards Association also, so we're not just with the council, we're also with the National School Boards Association. So my motion is that we look in and see if the National School Boards Association also does this and if not, to bring it back.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. I don't believe that we have that flexibility in this item, given that this is specific to the Council of Great City Schools, not a general like for future recommendations. So yeah, I'd love to turn it over to council to confirm that for us.

Lisa Logsdon:

Yeah. Lisa Logsdon for the record with the District Attorney's Office. You are correct, madam president. This item is written specifically for either just the approval of this professional service agreement. Staff can take that direction back and bring an additional item back, but it would need to come back agendaized.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. I have a concern about that given that it's a \$50,000 item. We are going to ask staff to go and they've already investigated, the council has already provided us reports that have allowed us to improve our own systems and processes in the past. This is previous boards who have accepted the council as a resource, so I don't know that that is a valuable use of our superintendent and her team's time, to go back and investigate what other groups exist to help with the process that she's requesting support. And Trustee Cavazos, you're in the queue next.

Trustee Cavazos:

Yes. Do we have audio to where people are..? Because people are asking me, we can't hear the votes and so I don't know if they're still having issues with that, but my understanding was that we had, if not video, we had audio because they want to be able to hear the votes because they can't see the votes. And so are we able to do roll calls on any remaining votes if we cannot get the video back up?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

The votes are available on board docs.

Trustee Cavazos:

I understand that, Madam President, I'm just speaking for the constituents that are trying to follow our meeting right now. That's all.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

And I'm speaking on behalf of the board, so I'm grateful that the members of the community are reaching out to you. However, there is existing, and I'm sorry and I apologize that there are issues. I know our team is working diligently to address them. As far as we're concerned, we have audio and the information that's available is available on board docs as well. Joe, do you...? It's back up. Okay. Thank you Mr. Caruso for clarifying that for us. Trustee Brooks?

Trustee Brooks:

Thank you Madam President. I want to provide some additional information about the National Association of School Boards. They focus on school boards and this is a district issue. The difference between the council is they provide services to districts and school boards, so they are equipped to do this. And the National Association of School Boards, they don't have this type of service. They only focus on governance and training related to governance.

And also the \$50,000 price tag, it is very unlikely that the district will find a vendor with this level of expertise for this amount of money. I heard some concerns from members about eight weeks being too long. An RFP process, that's like eight weeks just by itself. So, I understand if the board wants to take no action and do nothing, that's certainly an option. I don't think it's a good one, but it's a choice you can make.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. Trustee Barron?

Trustee Barron:

Yeah, for the record, the vote's over, right?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Do you have a motion, Trustee Barron?

Trustee Barron:

No. I'm wondering why we're still going over this when it's pretty clear that there is no resolution on this.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

It's called discussion.

Trustee Barron:

So the vote's over. Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

You can turn off your mic now, thank you. Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Almost the same thing. Can we move on to the next item? Because the vote has been taken, it failed and I'd like to move on to the next item that people are waiting to hear. Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Yeah, I apologize Trustee Barron, I did not mean for that to come off disrespectful. Thank you. Thank you. I do apologize, Trustee Barron. My tone should have not come off that way. I meant if you had nothing else to share, then it was time to turn off and I-

Trustee Barron:

It's late.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Yeah. Thank you for that. Trustee Brooks?

Trustee Brooks:

Thank you Madam President. I'm going to try another motion because this item is still open, so I will revise this motion. I am going to make a motion to explore entering into this contract and possibly looking at reallocating existing funds if that's an option. Existing funds through the council.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Existing funds meaning that there's a credit with the council?

Trustee Brooks:

Yes.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Okay. Okay. Thank you. Let's see. I have Trustee Cavazos in the queue.

Trustee Cavazos:

Yes. Could we go over again? Did we not take a vote? It was three to three, it failed. And I believe counsel weighed in that we had to limit this discussion and the motions to what was specifically agendized. So how is this items still open? I don't understand how it's still open.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Trustee Cavazos, there's still discussion that's taking place and it sounds like-

Trustee Cavazos:

How is the discussion...? I'm sorry madam president, but I thought the vote had been taken. Am I wrong?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

This has happened before where a motion takes place and then it fails. And if there is another motion like there is one right now, then we discuss and or take action.

Trustee Cavazos:

But it would still have to be within the parameters, correct?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Yes. And I can confirm with counsel to see if there is any concerns with these.

Trustee Cavazos:

Yeah. Could we read it over again? I'm sorry.

Lisa Logsdon:

So my understanding of the motion is that it is to enter into this professional service agreement with the council, contingent on it being within the available budget and not an additional 50,000. So, I'm not sure if that's something... So if the interim superintendent goes back to the council and that is not something that is able to be done in this contract, then the contract would not be entered into. So it would be contingent on the \$50,000 not being an additional expenditure, if I'm understanding your motion correctly, which is within the agenda item.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Trustee Cavazos, I'm going to put you back in the queue.

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, Madam President. So if I'm understanding correctly, we're going to have the interim superintendent contact the Council of Great City Schools and we're going to ask them if they could do this free and with no additional 50,000. And that would be within what budget parameters?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Who was that question directed to, Trustee Cavazos? Is it Trustee Brooks, because she made the motion?

Trustee Cavazos:

It's directed to whoever can answer it.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

You have a question, I have also [inaudible 04:06:48] to speak to this.

Trustee Cavazos:

I have a question if I could get it clarified. I could possibly have a second.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

What was your question again?

Trustee Cavazos:

The question again, is the motion to have the interim superintendent go back to Council of Great City Schools and see if they could do this study that is proposed here, this assessment for no charge at all?

Trustee Brooks:

That is incorrect. The motion is to explore whether or not existing funds that we have allocated through to this organization can be reallocated for this purpose.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay, so I would need a little bit, possibly make a motion, make a second. Between what existing funds paid to this organization?

Lisa Logsdon:

Oh, I'm sorry. Forgive me.

Trustee Brooks:

I think it's a question for me. I don't think you're going to be able to help. I think she knows what I'm talking about. Listen, it's getting late. It's getting late, and the motion is any existing contracts that we have for the Council of Great City Schools, if there's additional funding on it, we would take that money and reallocate it to this.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay. But it wouldn't be what we talked about before. So it wouldn't be money we had allocated like the 60,000 because as Madam President correctly pointed out, that was for a specific purpose that we chose to pause. Correct?

Trustee Brooks:

The motion is to consider that and then that would still need to be... It's actually way too late for this conversation. This meeting has been...

Trustee Cavazos:

I agree with you, Trustee Brooks on that point. I cannot support that because I think it's too vague and it's not specific enough. And so I do not have a second. So I'll take myself out of the queue.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. Trustee Cavazos. Trustee Bustamante Adams?

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you Madam President, I would like to second that motion.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you colleagues. We have a motion on the floor by Trustee Brooks, a second by Trustee Bustamante-Adams. Please cast your vote.

Colleagues, that motion does not pass. Unless there is another motion on the floor, right? Yeah, that does not pass. Unless there's another motion on the floor then we will leave this item as is and there is no action taken. No other motion, going once, going twice. My auctioneer voice is still with me. All right.

4.04 Board Counsel Scope.

Discussion regarding next steps for board counsel. [Contact Person: Evelyn Garcia Morales] (Ref. 4.04) (*According to Governance Policy GP-10: Construction of the Agenda*)

Trustee Garcia Morales:

All right colleagues. Thank you. We're going to move on to item 4.04. That's the board's counsel's scope. Okay. [inaudible 04:09:25] these, colleagues, this is not an action item, however, this is a discussion

Trustee Garcia Morales:

regarding the next steps for board counsel according to GP 10 construction of the agenda. Okay? And I am your point of contact. I am your friendly point of contact. So on September 24th, we received a letter from the D.A.'s office, the office of the district attorney regarding-

Trustee Guzmán:

Yes.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Okay, very good. Thank you colleagues. So we're in item 4.04, board counsel scope. I'm your point of contact. On September 24th, we received a notification from the office of the district attorney that we were going to require a shift in the support from the county with respect to counsel. That letter is attached as reference material. I am going to invite Mr. Caruso to come on up to provide us some historical context with respect to board counsel and how board counsel... Over the history lesson on board counsel and how board counsel has supported the board of trustees over the years. Mr. Caruso?

Joe Caruso:

Madam president members of the board, Interim Superintendent Larsen-Mitchell, Joe Caruso for the record. So there's really two parts to that. There's the timeline that the board has actually discussed, board counsel, a few times. And then there's also a high level list of what the board counsel works directly with me on, and of course directly with the trustees. So if you want, I can start with the timeline and go back to when this actually first was a discussion point about independent.

So, it was May 10th of 2018, the board actually had an agenda item where they were discussing hiring a board counsel slash chief negotiator. So, the concept at that time was to have a full-time employee of the district, but that person was the board's counsel and the chief negotiator. A job description was created and if memory serves, the position did fly. However, it was not filled.

Ironically, a week later, May 17th of 2018, the board approved the superintendent employment agreement for the previous superintendent, so we were in a transition then. So, here we are six years later, kind of ironic. Fast forward from that point. September 24th of 2020, the board did approve the superintendent to hire a confidential employee who served as a chief negotiator and assistant general counsel. So the concept of a board counsel and chief negotiator went to the side. That position, chief negotiator, went back under the office of the general counsel. So that position of course reports up through the superintendent.

Fast forward from there, February 3rd of 2021, a discussion came before the board on the solicitation of individual applications or proposals from law firms for the provision of general counsel services to the board of trustees. So that kind of reopened the door in '21, and as you know, we were in the midst of a pandemic. But the conversation at that point was, does the board want to revisit hiring someone or does the board want to look at actually contracting the service out?

That conversation continued on March 3rd of 2021. A wonderful document from our previous board counsel, Marianne Miller. She actually created a pros and cons list. So, that was presented to the board for the first time on March 3rd of 2021 at the board work session. And that document is actually really helpful to look at because it does give a great overview of options. Do you want to hire someone internal? Is the position better to have someone where it's outside counsel? And then she went through some examples for that. So, that was a great discussion point for those of you that were on the board at the time.

Joe Caruso:

On May 5th of 2021, there was a review discussion and possible action. The board, at the meeting on May 3rd, did ask that a request for qualifications be issued, that RFQ was then posted and from May 5th through May 20th, continued to look at possible candidates. May 20th, there were three board counsel candidate applications that were proposed. On June 10th of 2021, the board did make a motion to approve the firm Holly Driggs. So, that was a motion that was made at that meeting. July 7th, there was again a review and discussion about the board candidates. There was a motion at that meeting to place a hold on the item until the next work session. And then at the next work session, which was August 4th of 2021, there was a motion to approve using a county appointed attorney as board counsel, had been previously done. The motion was then amended to approve a county appointed attorney as board counsel and to direct Marianne Miller to contact the three firms for the hourly wage.

So the idea was the county would be the primary and then you would have the information if the board had the pleasure to use outside counsel. Fast forward, May 1st of this year, there were two items on the agenda, discussion regarding service provided under the NRS252.1-10. And then the second item was a discussion and possible action for request for proposal to seek potential counsel to work with and represent the board. That motion did not pass. And then of course, we're here this evening to talk about the letter that was received from the district attorney's office.

So, that hopefully provided kind of a high level of where we've been the past six years and how this is not a new conversation, but one that's actually come back a few times [inaudible 04:15:48] board. Would you like me to talk high level? Okay.

In speaking with our current board counsel, Nicole, and of course working closely with both Nicole and Marianne Miller. So some of the high level items. Number one, open meeting laws we've witnessed tonight. So that's the first and foremost. Working very closely together with public records requests. As you know, we both review the board and 100% take our time to be careful. We have that, as you know is alone, especially with the amount that we've received.

You need an attorney who is well versed in legal research. Nicole works very closely on making sure that if there's any questions on the NRS, we have the expulsion review board hearings that the board attorney works with. Obviously we're in the midst of a superintendent search, so I've been working very closely with her on that. We're in the midst of the vacancy at the same time. And then of course knowing the statute, and this of course was a conversation a few meetings ago regarding what the quorum is for being of the elected. And I know that that was a conversation that came up as that case.

So, there's a lot of research and of course any other issues that do come up. And then of course the litigation side as well. So hopefully that answers the question both on the timeline and high level.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. So colleagues, I want to offer steps forward, moving forward given that, as we know, we've paused the superintendent search. We are waiting for our District B representation. There will be an election and we'll have new members join the board in January. I'm asking actually for a moment for us to create a temporary resolution with the support of the Dr. Larsen-Mitchell and the Office of General Counsel for the District to support us on a limited scope and basis.

Given that the board, over the years, has increased some of the load on counsel, given the need for us to ensure that we're fully versed on OML, governance and training. I think some of these additional trainings for the new board will be incredibly essential and very powerful, ensuring that they can conduct their roles in an effective manner on the board. So my recommendation to the board, and this is given that we have a

Trustee Garcia Morales:

short window here between now and January to ask for support from Dr. Larsen-Mitchell and her team to ensure that we are able to only cover items that have to do with the board, that impact the entire board.

So, if trustees have questions, they would direct them to... Specifically questions around OML, Robert's rules of order and or abstentions or conflicts of interest, that members use or seek counsel's guidance from the district to provide those parameters. What I've noticed from serving as a president for the last two years, that sometimes we have a tendency to ask specific questions that are individual in nature and can be... Individual in nature and are not reflective of what the needs are of the entire board. So, I am asking for our asking for Dr. Larsen-Mitchell's support in this space for us as a board to unite and say, "Look, there's going to be a temporary solution." And we, as a result, this temporary fix will require various limited scope with respect to the needs that the board has, with respect to legal advice, specific legal advice.

And then ask the new body to make a decision in January whether they want to hire an internal counsel, although there are conflicts of interest that were described earlier because that person would still work under the superintendent and office of general counsel. Just we need to be mindful of that. Have a discussion in January that would potentially serve the next body to make an informed decision whether to hire external counsel or agree to the absolute limits of legal advice that is specific to the entire body.

So, that is my recommendation, instead of bringing an item for this body to make a decision that will impact the next group at large to potentially hire someone or seek a different path. Trustee Cavazos, I see that you're in the queue. I want to remind the colleagues, I'll go over to you in a second. Remind colleagues, this is not an action item, this is simply a discussion item and I want to emphasize a need to be clear that current counsel will be with us through the end of October. The letter says the 14th, I requested an extension through the end of October and they graciously granted it to us. And I also don't want to miss the opportunity. And I said that and moved very quickly through this item, but I really want to thank the county for their support over the years and appreciate their commitment to ensuring that we remain above bar. Above bar. Okay, Trustee Cavazos, you're on board.

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you Madam President. I had a question for our counsel tonight, if I could ask her to weigh in because I just want to make sure that I understood the letter that was sent from the DA's office. And I appreciate Ms. Logsdon being here tonight, very much appreciate it. Would I be allowed to go ahead and ask the question? I wanted to ask if, and this also pertains to what you were saying, Madam President, is that in the temporary solution, because this isn't an action item. My impression from the letter from the DA is that general counsel who's sitting right here in front of me, that if we did have something that came up, general counsel is available to us if we have a question for representing the entire board, not an individual?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

That is what the letter says, forgive me. And it is, I think that it is important for the board to be mindful of the load that this body places on counsel is extraordinary. And with existing workloads we have to be mindful of either the load that we provide and the questions that we ask and the involvement that we use with counsel, which is why I'm recommending the body make a decision in the future... For the future board to make a decision, permanent decision, about the success of the next steps with board counsel.

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you Madam president. And if I could just ask counsel to weigh in, Ms. Logsdon. Again, appreciation for you being here tonight. And also appreciation for your assistance in recent events. I very much wanted to say that to you. Will you be representing us, will you be basically here through the 31st, or will it be Ms. Malish?

Lisa Logsdon:

So as the letter says, we'll be transitioning services to the Office of General Counsel. The DA's office will be providing that. It could depend on schedules.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay. Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Dr. Larsen-Mitchell?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board. For the record, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell. I just want us to be very cognizant and have very clear guardrails because Mr. Okazaki has a full-time job, and it may not be Mr. Okazaki. It may be another attorney in the office. And they all already have full-time jobs and are working extremely, extremely hard. And so I would just like to advocate that we need to put some guardrails and some parameters, and really map out the timeline so that it's not in January when we start flying a position for if we go a different attorney for the board, like we need to start moving things because their plates are already full with the work that they are doing.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. All right, I'm going to move on to Trustee Barron.

Trustee Barron:

Yes, thank you very much. This is the fifth-largest school district in the country. I know we keep on talking about budgets. Having a really good attorney being part of the organization can make all the difference in the world. The city of North Las Vegas, I have been spoiled by having, of course, working with a young woman who is now the president of the Raiders, and then having another board attorney who, she and her team have won one award for their legal expertise after another. I have the utmost confidence that counsel ... I can never pronounce your last name. I'm so sorry. That should be easy enough. Okazaki, right? I have the upmost confidence in hearing and discussing with him, and seeing how he's handled very, how should say? Difficult cases that he is eminently qualified, of course, to be at the very least, a stopgap.

Of course, I am mindful that he already has a full load. I would just say that if we could have him step up as an interim to advise this board, sit on this board, and I'm sure he can teach a class in open meeting law and in ethics. I think that we could probably balance him a little bit more to advise this board and take the occasional question. It might mean a little bit more for others. But again, my experience with the other staff, with the other assistant board counsels that I met, they're pretty good, they're pretty good, and I think they could probably handle just a little bit more of the burden.

Trustee Barron:

And then, what I would say is very soon, this board will be going to have three, possibly four members, and I would highly advise the new board coming in to actually hire a board attorney and write it into, incorporate that position, make it part of the board policies, because right now, if you go to look to see what the board policies are, there's nothing there. I know I've asked questions before to be told that, "I don't answer to you," when I'm not asking for direction. I was asking for a simple legal opinion, and I've been told, "I don't take direction from you." Which is right, but I wasn't asking for direction, I was asking for a legal opinion.

And right here, it actually says that this counsel would say ... Let me put my glasses on. "Rendering legal opinions including advising members of the board of trustees, attending all board [inaudible 04:28:32], conducting litigation, negotiating contracts, and ..." Oh yeah, here, "Including advising members of the board of school trustees." Anyhow, I have the utmost in confidence that our legal counsel could do that, advise us on a basis until we actually do hire a permanent board attorney. And again, that position be integrated into the board policies.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. Thank you, Trustee Barron. I need to reiterate for our purposes here in this discussion that the board of trustees does not make decisions for staff. And that's the superintendent's responsibility. We do not direct staff and this is why therein lies a really clear example of why we would benefit tremendously from having our own counsel, so that our body could be supported in the way that sometimes is needed. All right, we're going to turn it over to Trustee Guzmán.

Trustee Guzmán:

Thank you. I have some questions about guardrails because that was brought up, and because I won't be a part of the team that's going to hire the next one. And so, here's my question. Here's my question, my friend. The guardrails are what we generally utilize counsel for. So it's a generalization. Am I correct on that, Dr. Brenda Larsen-Mitchell?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Forgive me. Let me turn on your mic. Here we go.

Trustee Barron:

Madam President, members of the board, Trustee Guzmán, yes.

Trustee Guzmán:

Right, so that's limited, because so I never called Nicole, I never spoke to Nicole, I never asked for anything. It was always through email. So this whole thing is shocking to me. So I'm just trying to understand what these guardrails are that we need to put in place. So when we're looking at what we have, what you have from the past, and it says what Marianne Miller put together, does it have generalizations for what we are supposed to ask our lawyer? Just generalizations.

Joe Caruso:

Madam President, members of the board, Interim Superintendent Larsen-Mitchell, Trustee Guzmán, to your point, so the job description from 2018 actually has a draft of 11 essential duties and responsibilities. There's a disclaimer, it's not exhaustive, and may be supplemented. The document that Marianne Miller

Joe Caruso:

created, which was presented on March 3rd, 2021, that gives a great pros and cons of internal, external. And I caution you, just as the conversation was in 2021, and I say this with the utmost respect with working with this board on and off since 2013, that the challenge is going to be if you hire ... Let me rephrase this. The challenge will become what happens if you have the general counsel who works for the superintendent, who represents the superintendent, but then also represents the board, and hypothetically, and I say this respectfully, you have a contractual problem with the superintendent.

Trustee Guzmán:

Right. No, and I get that.

Joe Caruso:

So that's where that ... And I remember, that's why this document, that first con was made in conflict in the event of contractual dispute with the suit. Because that was the big conversation then is, "Hey, what happens if that happens?" So that's where that outside ...

Trustee Guzmán:

Right. Is there a way that the trustees can get those 11 duties that we have? Because the thing is we have to have something in writing ... Oh, great. We have to have something in writing that states what parameters are. Because if you just say parameters, and we don't know what they are, then we're going to step outside, and someone's going to be upset. So rather than doing that, set distinctive parameters.

Joe Caruso:

Madam president, members of the board, Interim Superintendent Larsen-Mitchell, Trustee Guzmán, to your point, so the request for qualifications that actually went out and was posted, that Mary worked on, the documentation actually on page four gives a great overview. It's even more of a drill-down, so that would probably be what I would say would be a good starting point to look at. If the pleasure of the board is yes, we want to go to an RFQ, this would be something I would start with in essence to work on. But no, this is a great point. Now obviously, in here, it mentions consultation and advice related to legislation, including possible breakup of the school district AB 469 reorganization, and eliminating elected board. So that was 2018. How much of that is still relevant today? So obviously, there's some changes that need to occur.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you for that. Okay. Trustee Bustamante Adams?

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you, Madam President. First, for our legal counsel today, just express my gratitude for our district attorney in giving us the extension till October 30th. So thank you. I also would like to ask a question on the letter that was received from them on September 24th. It says in the first paragraph that the board of trustees has employed private counsel through the school district's office, a general counsel. And from what I understand, that is our current legal counsel. And my question is, if that were to be ... Not that it's not accurate, but if that were not the case, would the district attorney then be obligated through NRS to provide us legal counsel? I hope that made sense.

Lisa Logsdon:

Would you like me to respond? Lisa Logsdon for the record. So the statutory obligation under NRS 252.110 says, "Except for with respect to matters for which board of trustees of the school district has employed private counsel." So our research and interpretation of that statute is that when this board many, many years ago created an office of general counsel. You essentially have employed private counsel. You've determined to have private in sense of in-house counsel, not privately employed. But the fact that they're public employees doesn't mean that they're not private counsel to this board. And so, this is the same structure that Washoe County uses. They do not use their district attorney's office. And so we believe that this is allowed under the law, and is the correct interpretation going forward for this board.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

All right, Trustee Brooks, you're up.

Trustee Brooks:

Thank you, Madam President. I'm supportive of the direction that has been provided by you. I don't think this board would agree on an attorney or a path. I served for two years as the president, and the amount of time and energy that is spent on engaging with counsel from the time during my presidency, where I did not even have the person's cell phone number, it's just an astronomical shift. I understand there's some members who are probably wondering, because they probably never called Nicole, but there's a handful who are, just based on public record who are ... I don't know how she would get anything else done. So some members just seem to be utilizing counsel to engage in this infighting and undermining the board. And what actually needs to change is specific board behavior, but I don't think it's going to happen.

You should tackle this in January. Maybe that person will be more optimistic. And then, I do support these guidelines. I think the board needs some training on what it is they're supposed to be engaging back and forth with the counsel. It's not to referee fights. That's really just not the point. So I think these guidelines and some specific training for board members, I doubt if you shift this over to general counsel, that you're going to keep that person for any length of time because the amount of infighting and back-and-forth is just ... I don't know how anybody would tolerate it. I appreciate the county helping us this far along. I do think that the board in January is going to have to tackle this problem.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Trustee Barron?

Trustee Barron:

Yes, thank you very much. I'm just going to go ahead and again, defer my experience with a number of other boards, RTC, I'm the vice chair there, Flood Control, I'm the vice chair there, Water District City Counsel. Look, there should be no conflict. If there's something going on between the superintendent and the board. A city attorney, this board attorney, what their primary responsibility would be is to serve the district. Hey, when we have a city attorney, my city attorney right now, Andy Moore, he serves the city of North Las Vegas. And when he's there, he works with the city manager, in this case, this is pretty analogous here, with the superintendent. He advises the mayor and the counsel very similar to the president and the board.

And there is not either one or other. Their main goal is to serve and protect the Clark County School District. That's who they serve. Matter of fact, over at city counsel, we only hire two people, the city

Trustee Barron:

manager and the city attorney. That's it. Everyone works for the city manager, and then I get to talk to the city attorney regarding specific policies, if I have anything.

We're not talking about either an or we're not talking about ... And the problem is that this board doesn't have that clarity, and hasn't had that clarity. It's going to take a new board here to establish what they want out of their board counsel, because obviously, I don't think this board necessarily ... I don't think we're all together here on what the meaning of a board counsel is, and I think it should definitely be left up to the next board that's coming in to decide and to incorporate that person, that legal counsel into the board policies. We're talking about very established policies here on local governance.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

All right, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

So thank you to everyone for your patience. It's very late. It's a late meeting today. I don't think this is an action item, so could we wrap the discussion, because it's obvious that the new board is going to be having this discussion in the future? But I do want to honor our interim superintendent's comments about having the guardrails, and so I think we should just be respectful of that, and we appreciate that if Mr. Okazaki is willing to support us in the interim, can we close it out?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Dr. Larsen-Mitchell?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

Madam President, members of the board, for the record, Brenda Larsen-Mitchell. I have to advocate for staff and the workload because the Office of General Counsel works extremely, extremely hard, and they already have full-time jobs. We're willing to assist in the temporary. I'm just concerned about not starting a process until January, because that's like four months. So I would encourage the board if we could start that process, and I just again want to say that it may not be John Okazaki. We have to work together and identify who that staff member may be, but I just want to advocate for staff and acknowledge the workload that they already have.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you, Dr. Larsen-Mitchell. Trustee Guzmán?

Trustee Guzmán:

So we kind of do need some action then. And I'm asking because what they're asking for is direction, and I'm not saying that ... So my direction would be that Joe go back and share all of the information that we have for legal counsel with us to review, and we give feedback, and it comes back to us so that we can get started on at least posting it. And then, the new board can hire, they can do the interviews and hire, but at least we get the process going so that we can actually get it moving. Is that what you're looking for?

Trustee Garcia Morales:

I think that there is a ... Thank you.

Trustee Guzmán:

I know it's not an action item, but I mean

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you. Yeah, Trustee Guzmán, your suggestion, thank you for that. And I think that I will keep that in mind as I'm developing agendas. I certainly would love to work with you to see if we can map out a process or start to ... I'd love your feedback in a process to help move this work forward, and also be very abundantly clear about the guardrails that will exist. I will help develop those, would love your feedback around those as well, and make sure that they sound out okay with Dr. Larsen-Mitchell, which is all within my purview as president, so that we can provide some direction, and then also start beginning with the action, which is I hear the request of Dr. Larsen-Mitchell.

Trustee Guzmán:

Right.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Yep. Got it. Thank you for your support on that. Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

I'll just make this brief. I just want to concur with Trustee Guzmán. I think that's an excellent idea. And as the school board president in 2021, we spent several months, as Mr. Caruso said, developing the rubric along with DA Marianne Miller, and a lot of time developing that. And then, we did not hire someone because the majority vote chose a different direction. So I'm fully in support of Trustee Guzmán and the direction that she wants to give. Thank you.

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Great. Thank you. Joe, anything else for now? Thank you. Anything else? Appreciate it, colleagues, and appreciate your willingness to live in those parameters so that once they're communicated to you early next week, so that we effectively use our time and counsel's time in the temporary space that we're in.

Public Comment on Items Not Listed as Action Items on the Agenda

Trustee Garcia Morales:

I'm going to move on to public comment on items not listed as action items on the agenda. We'll start with individuals who signed up in advance. Let's see. I'm going to rattle off a couple of names, and then Trustee Bustamante-Adams is going to help me with the rest of the names here in a second. Autumn Tampa, followed by Stephen Ingersen, and Marie Neises.

No? No more Marie Neises. Jessica Jones, followed by Elizabeth Alder. Jessica Jones, coming up. Elizabeth? Is Elizabeth present? Cool. Thank you. Followed by Tyler Sutton.

Public Hearing

Jessica Jones:

Thank you, Madam President, members of the board, Interim Superintendent Larsen-Mitchell. For the record, my name is Jessica Jones. I teach kindergarten at Hickey Elementary School. I'm also the secretary of the Clark County Education Association. When my school received our budget, it showed a deficit in the general funds. Initially, Hickey looked to be in the hole over \$600,000, and the budget didn't look accurate. So imagine sitting in a room with six other people, staring at a budget sheet, and seeing that your budget wasn't what you passed in January. On top of CCSD's failure to adjust budgets for the 8% salary increase for educators, my SOTs saw phantom positions. They never existed ever. And our EL and at-risk funding went down. When we compared the EL and at-risk funding from our spring budget, the combined decrease in just those funds was \$272,000.

So Hickey is still a Title 1, one-star school. Our metrics never changed from January to September, and there was no clear communication from the district about those changes when we voted on budgets in September. It wasn't until last Thursday when the district communicated in a letter to State Superintendent Ebert, that the at-risk was changed from free and reduced lunch to projected grad scores, but this is all after the fact. Our former CFO claimed that this budgetary crisis with educators' salaries was not a miscalculation or an error, but a choice to go with the lower amount. It was a choice that forced my school and other schools to face the burden of balancing their budgets with school carryover dollars by cutting ... or by cutting positions.

So earlier, Trustee Brooks, in the budget meeting discussion, you said that this is what carryover was intended for. No, it's not. That is not what carryover dollars are intended for. They're intended to be used for kids' education. Instead of using them for things that will support these children, the district essentially forced us to plug up gaping holes in our school's budgets because of their poor budgetary choices, systematic incompetence, and mismanagement. The burden of CCSD's errors should have never been placed on individual schools. This board should be asking the interim superintendent, "How many schools were negatively impacted by cuts? How many children were negatively impacted by cuts?" And how many children lost their classroom teacher because of this District's failure to correct an issue for eight months. The entire thing is just completely unforgivable. The interim superintendent needs to be held accountable for this. The responsibility of that falls on you as a board. Honestly, you owe it to the children of Clark County because they just carried the burden of this mismanagement with their education dollars. Thank you.

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you, Ms. Jones. Elizabeth?

Elizabeth Adler:

Good evening, Madam President, Trustees, and Dr. Larsen-Mitchell. My name is Elizabeth Adler, and I'm a language learning strategist and SOT member at Sunrise Mountain High School, and a proud executive member of CCEA, and this is my 26th year in the district. I actually work at the school that Jessica's school feeds into. We are located on the same property. We're in the same block, elementary, middle, and high school. I am by no means a forensic accountant, but I do know how to add line items on a budget. After our most recent SOT meeting, we knew that at our school we were confronted by a \$3,403,002.70 budget cut. So when we're talking about numbers, it's not in the hundreds, it was \$3.4 million. That is a significant amount of money for any school.

Elizabeth Adler:

But fortunately, we did not have to lose one staff member, we did have to lose any educators, we did not have to lose any administrators or campus monitors, despite falling 168 students below our projected enrollment. I later calculated the difference between the budget the SOT received on January 24th and the budget in September, which those line items amounted to an additional \$6,039,860. So that's a variance of \$9,442,861.70 cents, between what we're supposed to cut and what the line items actually demonstrated. This includes all carryover dollars and attrition money due to being unable to fill positions last year.

During the last legislative session, there was much contention in Carson City, questioning how many schools in Clark County had hundreds of thousands to sometimes millions of dollars in carryover, money that was and is intended to be spent on the current students for the current school and fiscal year. With a significant error in this year's budget, if it weren't for many schools' carryover and attrition dollars, schools would've had to make even deeper cuts that would ultimately have detrimentally impacted our children in their schools.

When any school administrator has asked why they carryover so much, this year's fiasco has justification that principals must protect their schools by ensuring they can continue maintaining staff services and supplies to the children they've been entrusted to educate. In addition, when I asked about weights for at-risk, special ed and ELL categories, not one administrator could tell me what those weights were. They couldn't tell me if they were percentages, if they were dollar amounts, how they were allocated, and it was not in the Oracle budget nor the budget we were presented. So how are we supposed to make decisions when our administrators don't even know what those cuts are? I used to believe that the jobs of educators was to teach and guide our children. Now I know that we have to watch every financial decision in the district. Thank you.

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you, Elizabeth. Tyler Kenney.

Tyler Sutton:

My name's Tyler Sutton, for the record. Thank you, Madam President, members of the board, and Interim Superintendent for giving me the opportunity to speak concerning the current state of CCSD's budget. I've been a mathematics teacher in CCSD for 20 years. This is not the first time that I've heard the district claim to have a budget shortfall. Each time this has been done in the past. It comes with similar results. Teachers across the district become anxious and many begin to question if CCSD is a school district with the stability that they require. But I'm particularly concerned regarding this budget crisis concerning the substantial investment made by our state legislature and our governor during the last legislative session, it seems that either the district's leadership is completely incompetent or we're once again being lied to.

I'm aware that our district's CFO, Jason Gowdy was fired for his role in this budget crisis. However, he's undoubtedly not the only person who had a hand in its manufacturing. He should not be the only person held accountable. Dr. Brendan Larsen-Mitchell was at the right hand of our former superintendent for years, and has been the acting superintendent since his departure. Are we honestly supposed to believe that she simply left all matters and knowledge of the district's finances exclusively in the hands of the CFO?

CCSD's current budget created with and later approved by Dr. Brenda Larsen-Mitchell well before it was sent out to the schools. We've heard many excuses for this. Well, it was \$20 million, then it was \$12 million on the paperwork we have tonight, and then we're supposed to believe that it's now \$10 million shortfall? Student enrollment dropped. We've heard that student enrollment dropped, that we didn't calculate at-risk

Tyler Sutton:

students correctly, that we didn't estimate the cost of teacher raises correctly. We've also been told that schools would not have to absorb this shortfall. The fact is that schools across the district are planning for the worst because they don't have the faith that this promise will be upheld. Even some of the high-performing schools that we heard from tonight had to make obvious cuts. We are tired of this deception and deflection of responsibility. We're asking for genuine transparency, and we're asking for competent leadership concerning the budget in the future. Thank you very much.

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you, Tyler. Kenny, and then Raquel Lara.

Kenny Belknap:

Good evening, Interim Superintendent Brendan Larsen Mitchell, School Board of Trustees. For the record, my name is Kenny Belknap. I'm a social studies teacher at Liberty High School, and I serve as the vice president of the Clark County Education Association. Tonight, I'm speaking on this manufactured budget crisis that our district is facing. Over the last several weeks, the Brendan Larsen-Mitchell administration has changed its story multiple times as to why the shortfall even exists. At first, it's because enrollment's down, people aren't having kids. Then it's educators' faults, and our raises. Then it was because of lawsuits and cybersecurity concerns. It was only until the state stepped in till did the district actually own up, the Brenda Larsen-Mitchell administration own up to this crisis being because they didn't do their job accurately. This leaves the community asking one question, "How? How did this happen?"

The state did their part. The governor and our state legislative leaders gave more money to this district than we could have ever imagined before. This is mismanagement to the highest degree, and this alone demonstrates that Brenda Larsen-Mitchell is not qualified to even be considered to be our next superintendent. Just look at the timeline that was presented to you tonight. She missed one step along the way, that she was not in charge of this district, and this is the crisis we have laid at our feet. Not only has she failed this test, she can't even say what actually happened, just like people have mentioned, that the number keeps changing. Even though Larsen-Mitchell says things have been worked out at the schools. Matter of fact, that's not the case. Schools are eliminating positions. You had principals sitting here tonight. Look at the presentation they put together. We have four times as many teachers being cut and support staff, but not as many administrators. So the kids are burdened with this dramatic mismanagement by our interim superintendent, that we just sit here tonight in our presentation and we're supposed to sit and here be kumbaya, that everything's fine, that we're not here to really find out what happened. I think that's disingenuous and you're not doing your job as leaders of our community and you're letting our children suffer because of it. So tonight we're calling on you to hold your one employee accountable. This district is losing any ounce of credibility it has. I remind you, February the legislative session opens up and if we all care about the education of our students, that's what we should be focused on. Making sure we get funding for our kids and we make sure that this district's still here in the future and we're not going to do that by sitting here and playing kumbaya. She fired Gowdy as the fall guy and this has put the problem in your lap. It's up to you now. You are the decision makers. You need to call for accountability and it needs to be now. Thank you.

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you Kenny, Raquel. Barry.

Barry Wissman:

For the record. Barry Wissman CCA executive board member 21 year veteran teacher at Frank Kim Elementary School and the chair of the Frank Kim SOT. I'm here to speak out against the district's lack of transparency regarding the budget crisis our schools are currently facing. Interim Superintendent Brenda Larsen Mitchell's response last Thursday to the state superintendent's request for information clearly showed the malfeasance at the district level that has become so commonplace. She admitted that several errors were made developing the budgets for all schools. She noted the agreed raise for educators in the collective bargaining agreement was not included and the at-risk funding for each school used the incorrect formula. For every school, that resulted in decreased funding for this school year, even though principals and school operations teams depended on that money to staff schools. The interim superintendent sidestepped answering other questions fully merely stating that the district had at that time a potential budget deficit of 20 million. I'm sorry, potential \$20 million deficit. Almost four weeks into this mess and we still can't get an actual number. It keeps changing.

The Larson Mitchell administration then states that schools have not been asked to make up that potential shortfall, but tell that to my school. The lack of accounting for the agreed upon raise for teachers and the erroneously applied formula to at-risk student funding left my school with an approximate \$400,000 deficit. When you took into account the almost \$200,000 of carryover funds we had, we applied those, we still ended up having to cut two positions, an art teacher and a learning strategist directly affecting students. Students are saying goodbye to two educators two months into the school year and we got off lucky.

Many other schools you've heard tonight had deficits exceeding \$1 million. Now one question for trustees is how many schools are like mine? How many had to make decisions to cut their budgets to address the shortfall? How many students have been affected? Record funding and we're out of money. Make it make sense. To not have answers to these questions is beyond baffling. It is just gross incompetence. The Larsen-Mitchell administration can't handle basic accounting principles and the schools are left to balance the budget. We need transparency now. We need accountability now. Thank you.

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you so much Barry. Tiffany and then Robin Carpenter.

Tiffanie Bemoll:

Good evening. Tiffanie Bemoll for the record. If you look closely at any of the Las Vegas parent groups on social media, there's a discrepancy in discipline from school site to school site. How a school handles a fight, insubordination or vaping on campus kind of should be similar and it does not seem to be from the confusion of the parents. It's just like cell phone pouches and one point of entry campuses. All the rules need to be applied in the same way. I don't think it should be based on a zip code or site-based administrator's decision. If the rules are set by the district, I think they should be followed the same way. It's too confusing to do so otherwise. Consistency, transparency and accountability. You've got to catch them all. Another issue we're seeing in high school is stamina and rigor. Pick up any educational journal, talk to a college professor at an Ivy League and you'll see that colleges are reporting they're having issues with their incoming freshmen not being able to read, analyze, and synthesize college textbooks. I can't read either tonight. Not just Nevada, but nationwide. Taking novels out of the classroom is a slippery slope and just using snippets to ensure that a student can do Exact Path, SBAC or whatever standardized test is dangerous. Being able to lose yourself in the pages of a story can be an escape for a student, but there's

Tiffanie Bemoll:

just not time in classes anymore to do novels. We need to find time to find a way to help students find a love for reading. Books need to be important too.

Lastly, just something not sitting right with me tonight. Words matter. It's a little flippant when school site budgets were cut and SOTs had to make tough decisions to get rid of after-school programs, tutoring, staff, supplies like paper, toner, or color ink. To sit and say, oh, it's only 0.03% of the budget. It's not a crisis. And then say, one needs to be mindful of one's words because that only 0.03% hurt a lot of people collectively and to some schools, half a million dollars definitely feels like a bit of a crisis. My site was \$800,000 and that is a bit of a crisis. Thank you.

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you very much. Robin, followed by Nicole.

Robin Carpenter:

Good evening. My name is Robin Carpenter and I am here to speak again about the status of school libraries in our district. My colleague Nicole and I were grateful to Deputy Superintendent Gutierrez for meeting with us after the August board meeting to discuss policy 6161 and the situation at some of our libraries. The board and the superintendent's office seemed to genuinely care about the topic. So allow me to update you on a few specific schools. At Hancock Elementary School in your district, trustee Brooks, there's a long-term sub in the library and a very experienced licensed librarian in an autism classroom. She applied for the library position but was offered the autism position instead for which she has no experience because the library position was "built". It was not. The administration at Hancock is holding the position for a teacher at the school who plans to receive her certification next year.

At McDonell Elementary School in your district, trustee Cavazos, the librarian is physically back in the library, but as of a week ago, we hear that the library is still not on the specials rotation and students are still not receiving instruction from the librarian. Also in your district is Mack Middle School where the librarian has finally returned to the library from the classroom position he was placed in at the beginning of the year. A step in the right direction, but students still can't effectively use the library because it is essentially the tech storage area. Smart boards, printers, and carts full of Chromebooks block student access to the books in their library. The photos are something to see.

At Knudsen Middle School in your district, trustee Zamora, the effective certified and experienced librarian was moved back to the classroom at the beginning of the year. We know now that the principal hired a retired librarian instead, someone he just coincidentally worked with in the past. So the previous librarian took his 14 years of teaching and tech experience and the library certification that CCSD paid for and went to a charter school instead. One less retained teacher for CCSD.

At Hyde Park Middle School in your district, trustee Garcia Morales, students can only access the library at lunch because the librarian is still assigned to teach ELA, a position not currently flying for external or internal hiring. We say that every day matters for our students, but at Johnston Middle School also in your district, students have had zero access to their library this year. Some physical changes are currently taking place in the library, but those only began this month. So why have students not had access to their library for the entire first quarter of the year? And trustee Barron, that's O for two for licensed librarians in magnet schools in this part of North Las Vegas, since NECTA does not have one either. Do certain areas of region one just not matter? We will continue to advocate for all of our students, all of whom need and deserve effective...

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you Robin. Nicole.

Nichole Beer:

I won't talk about central office. I'd like to congratulate the four principals for doing a great job. There's one thing that they all have in common. They all have librarians certified in their buildings, so it's not a coincidence. I would encourage our most failing CCSD administrator, Melanie Poster, she has 50% vacancies at Johnston Middle School and pushed Robin here out of the library so they had a long-term sub. Don't have it anymore. I would hope that she could maybe get some mentorship from some of them. She is your worst administrator and really, really is struggling over there. I digress. I'm coming before you today to make sure the board is aware of some new trends we're seeing nationwide as a reaction to hate groups such as Moms for Liberty and other book banning anti-government groups.

We are hearing that soft banning is happening here in CCSD. Soft banning is a term used to describe how buying behaviors of librarians and school districts changed based on fear. We cannot let this happen. I urge leadership in this board to make certain that site-based administration discuss whether librarians and book selection committee that we are mandated to collect diverse books under 6150. "These materials shall be selected from 6150." "These materials shall be selected by the professional staff in a manner that's inclusive and responsive to the diversity of persons without discrimination or segregation on grounds of race, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, or age." This is a CCSD regulation. It's not negotiable. This board passed with new inclusionary language when hate groups are focused on wearing hazmat suits to board meetings. They were always late to the party and never bring anything but a big old pot of hate and bigotry.

We want to make sure that your principals are aware and the internment are making libraries aware of the diversity policies and collection development that must happen in order for each of our school buildings to be truly diverse. We have speakers come before this board who define books about social-emotional learning as pornographic. If you equate social-emotional learning to pornography, you're the problem. You need help. And please, for the sake of the families, make sure that you guys have mental health resources available for them. One of those individuals is CCSD trustee candidate Lydia Dominguez. You might not be sure of who I was talking about. She wore the ball cap and the short shorts last time. I'm sure you're aware we don't allow hats in the building, in schools here. So somebody might want to tell that candidate that. She has shown support for hate groups as determined by the Department of Justice in the Southern Poverty Law Center, not my words, such as Gaze against Groomers and Lives of TikTok.

She has tried to distance herself from anti-government groups such as Moms for Liberty. She's not fooling me and I certainly hope she isn't fooling this board or community. I urge you to make certain that her bid for the open seat in district B is met with a wall of literacy freedom and she has not given an interview for a job she's not mentally suited for. In addition, some courageous trustees on this dais have pledged support outside of their trustee duties to support candidates that can contribute positively to our staff and students. I encourage all of you to support tested educated trustees that will not destroy intellectual freedom for this board community and [inaudible 05:10:08].

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you Nichole. James Bayliss. Vicki Kreidel. Walter Jones. David Gomez followed by and I think... No. Stephen Phillips.

David Gomez:

David Gomez for the record. Nevada Peace Alliance President. I think you guys are either going to listen to a bunch of people that have specialized agendas behind what they're doing or what they're saying or you're going to look at the truth. Facts are facts. We go into a courtroom, look at facts. So do I believe that she should have her own counsel? Yes. Do I believe you guys should have your own counsel? Yes, I do. But I believe that we're going to be in a heap of trouble because we're a political subdivision of the state and now we don't have a DA to help us. So there's going to be some problems coming really fast. Trust me.

And a lot of these guys don't know how to litigate that well. I'm not saying that no lawyer doesn't know how, but not all lawyers are created equal. And everybody's screaming about budgets and deficits and everything like that, but they conveniently forgot and they conveniently ran out of the room that \$68 million was missing. We had a problem in 2000, what was it? 15, 16, 17, somewhere around there. 18. Thank you for the correction. I've got to clear up my years, but it's been a while and you know what? We're talking about 10.9 when there were 68 million missing? And what was it? Jim McIntosh was over there, Brambury was over there, and then actually Jim McIntosh got married to... Who was that? The person in charge of hiring.

So he got married to her and a whole bunch of other things went down. But everybody conveniently want to throw smut at her and they're saying, okay. She came up here, she don't even have to ask you. She can approve something \$50,000 without asking you nothing. But instead she came up here and was transparent with everybody and was allowing you guys to help her make a decision. And instead, everybody wants to get mad at her. And I don't understand that. She can approve 50,000 without nothing. She don't have to tell you nothing at all. Zero. But yet you're going to listen to a bunch of itemized groups of people out here talking about what isn't and what is?

The truth of the matter is she came up here and showed us, I am responsible for our money and I'm going to ask you to help me make a decision with \$50,000. Whether you agreed with the group or not, or you did. But you know what? I think that sometimes your vision is clouded and you guys only see like this and you don't really see what's really happening and you don't know what the policy says at times. And you know what? Isaac Barron, I think you're very practical, dude. Man, you are something else. I love it. But it's funny at the same time. But you guys got to look at these things and start to look at what she's doing here in front of you without doing it behind your back.

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you, David. Stephen, and then Jasmine and Jessica.

Stephen Phillips:

Hello Steve Phillip for the record. Hello members of the board. While I'm slightly relieved that 4.03 didn't pass for a number of obvious reasons, I do think we need to take a close look at some of these potential conflicts of interest when it comes to the budget and the approval of who's doing the oversight. I still think we have a long way to go. I still think we have a lot of transparency, accountability, and trust to build in the community. So I mean, it's a step in the right direction, but we still have a long way to go and I'm hoping that we can all make it there. So that's all I got. Thank you.

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you, Stephen. Jasmine Arnold.

Jasmine Rich-Arnold:

Good evening, Madam President, Board of Trustees [inaudible 05:14:56] Interim Brenda Larsen-Mitchell. My name is Jasmine Arnold. Yes ma'am. I am speaking as the mother of Jessica Arnold, one of your students at [inaudible 05:15:09] Faiss Middle School. Today we're going to be speaking about real shortly harassment on my daughter and disciplinary actions at the [inaudible 05:15:23] Faiss Middle School. I'm going to have Jessica read. Something happened to her. Timeline is January 23rd up until the present. My speech is longer than three minutes. This is very important to me. It's crucial and this has affected her in a very negative way. So I want to have her go ahead and read this treatment of harassment from a principal, Vespa.

Jessica Arnold:

Mr. Vespa told my friend that before I suspend anyone I want Jessica gone. I once asked him, "Why don't you like me?" He said, "You've got too many tardies and you don't listen and you're disrespectful." After he said that, I always tried to avoid him and he always had something to say to me. Every single time I entered the 800 hallways, he said something to press me or get under my skin. And it does. He would say, "Maybe we should have a meeting with mom and dad," and I don't know why he would say that like I was in trouble or something. And I would just keep walking. Then he would say, "Jessica, do you not hear me talking to you? Do you want to serve in-house for today? Maybe right outside my office." Then I would walk back and let him talk. I would maybe say a thing or two, but I know if I said the wrong thing that he'll put me in-house. He would tell people not to be my friend because I'm a bad influence. Or maybe he would say, "Hang around a different group."

Or he would say... Sorry. Okay, so he would say, "Just hand around a different group." Knowing my friends they would say, "I like my friend group," or, "I like hanging out with Jessica." Sometimes I feel like I feel targeted because when it was pajama day, I had my scarf on my head and Mr. Vespa said to take it off. Before I did, I pointed out this girl with a scarf [inaudible 05:17:27]. He said it was okay for her because she had some of her hair out. I also said that I had some of my hair out and he said no. So I took it off, then I put it back on because I saw two more girls with scarves on. This other incident is when I was in the quad with my friends and Mr. Vespa approached me and he came up to me and pressed up against me and he was looking at me and my friends-

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Hold on for a second, Jessica. You both signed up with a yellow card, so we're going to start the clock for another three minutes and-

Jasmine Rich-Arnold:

I appreciate that.

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Okay.

Jasmine Rich-Arnold:

He pressed up against her. Go ahead.

Jessica Arnold:

He pressed up against me and looking at me and my friends with his hands on his hip. Then he walked away. The second time is when we was in the lunchroom and I was standing up and he came up to me, he pressed up on me and he said, "Sit down," with his hands on his hips.

Jasmine Rich-Arnold:

I'm learning of this information over the last past 72 hours what's been happening at the school? I have been made not aware of this. Today I've been in contact with the principal, Mr. Wes. I said, "Mr. Wes, what my daughter has described is a person of predatory nature." This calls me to remember in January of '23, a teacher by the name of Ms. Kelts punished Jessica to the ground, which she told the teacher, "I'm not a dog. I'm not going to sit on the ground." This is not a lesson taking place. This was a form of punishment. My daughter disregarded the order to sit on the floor and went for a chair, and the disheartening thing was that she still said, "Get on the floor. Go sit on the floor."

Jessica ran out of the school. This was in '23. I received a call. "She just took flight," she said. She called me. She said, "Mom, come now. Come get this teacher. Help me." I said, "Whoa, I'm on my way." But since that time up until now, there's just been an ongoing jab and stab at her. The environment has become hostile at the school, a disruption of her educational time, and I want this board whoever's in place for region two to take a look at this. I'm going to leave our statement, statement from friends as far as the nature and behavior of this teacher on my child. There's a lot of moving parts and I'm upset. I'm highly upset because something has happened in the school from the punishment, it's ridiculous, it's excessive, actions don't warrant. It's too much. Expulsion. It's a lot. So I want somebody to call me. I want to discuss this, what happened to my daughter.

Trustee Bustamante-Adams:

Thank you, Ms. Arnold. That concludes our public comment. I'm going to turn it back over to our board president to close out the meeting.

Jasmine Rich-Arnold:

I got [inaudible 05:21:19]. Okay.

Upcoming Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Thank you, trustee Bustamante-Adams. Okay, colleagues. Item 6.01 is the upcoming meeting of the Board of Trustees on Thursday, October 24th at 5 p.m. here in the boardroom.

Adjourn: 10:23 p.m.

Motion to Adjourn

Motion: Guzmán Second: Zamora Vote: Unanimous

Trustee Garcia Morales:

Currently seeking a motion to adjourn. Trustee Guzmán.

Trustee Guzmán:
I move to adjourn.

Board President:
Thank you. Trustee Zamora.

Trustee Zamora:
Thank you Madam President. I would like to second that motion.

Board President:
Thank you, trustee Zamora. Colleagues, we have a motion by trustee Guzmán, a second by trustee Zamora. Please cast your vote. Thank you, colleagues. The motion passes six to zero. The time is 10:23 p.m. Have a great night.