

Cohoes City School District - Board of Education Meeting - April 22, 2020

Transcription of Live Broadcast

Mr. Nolin: So, I'll call the meeting to order at 6:03 PM. Welcome to Cohoes City School District Board of Education Meeting for April 22, 2020. If we could please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance please.

Meeting Participants: I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Mr. Nolin: Okay, can we get a roll call please?

District Clerk: Sorry, I was muted. Mrs. Giller-here, Mr. Pascal-here, Mrs. Annely-here, Mr Jackson-here, Mrs. Dion-here, Mrs Carey-here and Mr. Nolin-here.

Mr. Nolin: If anyone has any comments from the public, please send them to boecomment@cohoes.org. That's short for Board of Education at Cohoes.org. I'll put that in the Webex chat as well, along with your name and address; and we'll use questions from that email in lieu of our normal public comment period. I'll turn it over to our Superintendent, Dr. Spring.

Dr. Spring: Thank you. Good evening Board of Education members and members of our school community. This is Superintendent Jennifer Spring on behalf of the Cohoes City District. I welcome you, and I thank you for joining us this evening. Before we get started with tonight's budget presentation, I would like to provide a few updates. Charter schools--As payments to charter schools is something we have discussed as part of our budget. I wanted the Board to know that we are in the process of sending out letters, emails and phone calls to Cohoes families who attend charter schools to let them know about our meal distribution and to check in with them to see if we can provide any support. At this time, we are also contacting the charter schools directly to ask for their continuity of learning plans to ensure they're meeting the needs of Cohoes children who attend their schools. Connecting with our students--A question was asked at our last board meeting about the schedule of teacher/student, check-ins and teacher office hours. This has been posted to our website. Additionally, we were asked about our efforts and ensuring how we are reaching out and connecting with each student, each and every student. The list keeps getting smaller, which is good news; but we aren't going to stop until we have been able to contact each student. To help us with this effort, we have enlisted the help of Jim Ward, the Public Safety Commissioner for the City of Cohoes; and we will be working and coordinating how to make home visits to help us track down some of our families and deliver messages to them. I also wanted to give a shout out to Mayor Keeler for having the Cohoes Department of Public Works pave Elm Street for us and continuing about twenty feet onto the district's property at the high school. This was definitely needed as there were a lot of potholes. We, greatly appreciate the spirit of teamwork and collaboration as we are one Cohoes and working together is very important. A school re-entry plan—our BOCES has provided guidance on reopening schools following Covid-19 closures. While the Governor has

not provided any specific information on when we will be returning to our buildings, we wanted to be proactive and begin these discussions so we are prepared. We will be reviewing the document at tomorrow's Admin Council meeting to discuss such things as equipment and supplies needed, infection control protocols, building in classroom procedures, including arrival and dismissal and the use of personal protective equipment. I would also like to expand this response team to include other stakeholders such as Board of Education members, nurses, teachers, parents and students. Staff access day will be this Friday. Since the closure has been extended through May 15 and we are entering the next continuity of learning, we wanted to provide all staff with the opportunity to enter our buildings this Friday. Principals have already prepared a schedule that allows for social distancing. This will also allow members to retrieve resources and materials needed for the remainder of the school year and grab any personal items that they may have left. Our elementary buildings are also preparing for the distribution of additional materials and resources that will be distributed to our families on Wednesday next week. Buildings are also on their third or maybe fourth deployment of Chromebooks. And at this point, we have distributed over half of our inventory to our students, and we will continue to do so. I can answer any questions on the updates at this point or we can wait until the end, whichever the Board prefers. Okay, Aaron, we can wait until the end and answer all questions at the end. Aaron, I would like to put the budget presentation on the screen. Hi, everybody. Great pictures. Alright, you can proceed to the next slide. Okay the New York State Budget, as we shared in our last meeting, foundation aid for the next school year is flat - meaning that projections are being held at the same level. We all know this is unfair. It is not equitable for our students and for our community. Especially since we are heavily reliant on state aid as 55% of our budget does come from the state. This disproportionately impacts us in comparison to our suburban neighbors. A pandemic adjustment -- As we shared again at our last Board meeting, this adjustment was included in our foundation aid where reductions in state were offset through the Federal Cares Act. The state budget includes a mechanism for periodic adjustments, which authorizes the ongoing assessment of state revenue. So, what does this mean? The state can reduce allocations to localities, including school districts if revenue comes in below budget. The determination for reductions would be made during specify measurement periods of April 1-30, May 1-June 30 and April 1- December 31. We will know if we received an adjustment to our state aid payment for the first look-back period the first week in May. These look-back periods pose the possibility for additional or mid-year cuts meaning that we could receive less state aid funding than expected. If this happens, we will need to implement an emergency response plan to address the additional loss in aid. And over the weekend, the Governor cautioned for the potential of additional cuts if federal assistance is not provided. Aaron, you may now go to the next slide. This is Draft 2 of our budget. You will recall that on February 26, we proposed the first draft of the 2020-21 Budget. This does seem like a long time ago, because our world has drastically changed in such a short period of time with the Covid-19 pandemic. The state released their budget on April 2. And with that, we saw the early impact of the health crisis on the State's finances. As we shared at our last meeting, we have had to adjust our budget goals and keep the growth of this year's budget and next year's budget to 0%. Therefore, the proposed budget for the 2020-21 school year is the exact same as the budget approved by voters for this current school year. Well, these are extremely difficult circumstances. Our goal and our commitment is to preserve the quality of education for our students as best as we can. Now, I would like to turn the presentation over to Stacy Mackey, the School Business Official for the Cohoes City School.

Stacy Mackey: Good evening. As a recap for the budget proposals originally presented in late February to the Board of Education, we're going to refer to that as Draft 1. So the proposed budget in late February was \$44.3 million. At the time there was an identified budget gap of nearly \$1.2 million. We had identified budget goals to cap growth year over the year of the budget to 1%. Originally when we presented in February, the budget goals were to strengthen the cash position of the district as we had historically relied heavily on the use of fund balance and reserves to balance our budget. With the release of the state budget in early April, and with the foundation aid being at the same levels as the 2019/20 school year, it was clear that we were going to have to adjust our budget goals, and we would have a 0% growth proposed as a result.

So again, the proposed budget is \$43.8 million. That is the same as the current year budget. And the new gap figure is \$1.6 million. Next slide please Aaron. So under both Draft 1 and 2, the tax cap remains the same. So the amount the maximum allowable tax levy for Cohoes City Schools is just over \$16 million. That is a 2.32% increase and new revenue for the District of \$363,000. This is reported to the state comptroller March 1 on an annual basis. As far as an estimated tax rate, we use our best estimate as provided from the city for the total tax roles for the upcoming year. In the calculation is 37.8 for the proposed estimated tax rate. Now, this number will change when the tax role for the city is finalized in July. So that is our best estimate at this point in time. The Estimated impact to our average home owner for a home with an assessed value of a \$150,000 will be about \$60 on an annual basis or just under \$5 per month. Next slide. This is an expense summary, a high level-summary. Key takeaways here are employee benefits you see growth in that category. That is attributed to rate increases for TRS and health insurance premiums. I also see a modest growth in transportation. Our contracts are based off of estimates. Contract extensions are based off of the estimates. This does include contract forgiveness for CDTA. A 30% reduction in their contract for the upcoming year which resulted in a \$36,000 savings to the district. Next slide please. Revenue--Key, takeaways in these areas are the state and the building aid, again, are 55% of our total revenue. We are expecting a modest increase in federal aid. That's on Medicaid reimbursement. Consumer utility taxes are trending on point, so no real change there. Statement in lieu of taxes are based off of estimates as provided by the city a modest increase there. You take the waves and revenues besides the state aid is the inter-fund revenues and fund balance. So as part of our budget goals, it was a goal to reduce our dependency on use of reserves. So you'll see over a 30% reduction from 2019-20 to 2020-21. It is important to note that the two reserves that are being used are mainly ERS and TRS in the proposed budget, and those two reserves would be exhausted after June 2020/21. Fund balance -- Why there is a \$116,000 in appropriated fund balance, We don't anticipate that we'll use the \$317,000 that was allocated for the current school year. So why the dollar figure isn't zero, you will note that the percentage of the budget it is zero as a percentage of the overall budget. Next slide please.

Dr. Spring: Okay, this is a Superintendent Jennifer Spring again. I would like to recap some of the key points in this budget presentation as Stacy already outlined. First of all, the budget growth has been capped at 0%. The proposed tax levy increase is 2.32%. We will be using all of our ERS and TRS reserves as Stacy mentioned. And this is worrisome because we know that those expenses are going to increase exponentially most likely in the following school year. The use of our appropriated fund balance of \$117,000 which represents is 0% of the total revenue.

This budget includes reductions and efficiencies totaling \$1.6 million broken down by spending categories. Instruction--This covers a \$1,150,000 reduction in instruction, which includes staffing, professional development, curriculum writing, furniture, tutoring and BOCES services. Employee Benefits--The reduction of \$200,000 includes reductions in staff and related expenses such as TRS. Operations and Maintenance--This reduction of \$170,000 includes reductions in materials, supplies and equipment. Transportation--is reduced by \$107,000 for reductions and field trips and CDTA. In a post-Covid world, reductions in these areas will prove very difficult to overcome when we return. Students will return with wider gaps in their learning. We will need all of our teachers to help overcome learning gaps caused by the closure. Students will return with a much greater need for social emotional support than ever. We will need all of our staff members to help our students overcome the effects of the trauma caused by the pandemic. We will need to disinfect our buildings to a daily and nightly standard never seen before. We will need to order additional disinfecting and cleaning supplies and PPE in order for our custodians and cleaners to help keep our building safe from the virus. Next slide please. Next steps--We will continue to analyze the budget, our spending plan and review district data, class sizes and return on investment of current programs and services with our administrative team. We will continue to conduct discussions with all collective bargaining units to discuss possible efficiencies. I am recommending that we schedule a Board of Education budget workshop for next Tuesday, May 5, to include information on the April 30 measurement period and to finalize budget discussions. While we are still not sure of the official date of the budget vote as we are still waiting for the Governor, there are deadlines we must comply with. We will need to submit the property tax report card to SED before the second May Board meeting with the particulars of our budget. Therefore, I'm recommending that the Board of Education approve next year's budget at the May 6 meeting. Engage the community through a Thoughtexchange process or some manner in which we can engage the community and get their input. To give you an idea about what Thoughtexchange is, it's an online platform which allows people to pose a question to others that would be us. It allows respondents to share their thoughts and provide as many responses as they like. The next step then is for people to rate the responses of others, depending on how strongly they agree or disagree with an idea, People can rate as many thoughts as they like. And then these thoughts are sorted, rated and shared with all of the respondents. Other communities are using this as an option and I thought it is something worth trying in Cohoes. And I would like to work on this with Aaron Cagwin. It is important to engage our community, and I think that obviously the the closure has made it a little different for that, but we want to make sure that we're making this extra effort. Next slide please. So, at this time, we would like to ask for questions from the Board, and I would also like to remind the public please email your comments to boecomment@cohoes.org, and we would be happy to answer your questions.

Mr. Nolin: Jennifer, you had two dates listed there, May 5 and May 6. Were you suggesting a meeting on both of those days? I just want to make sure.

Dr. Spring: I am. I'm suggesting an additional meeting on May 5 that we hadn't planned, but to go ahead with that workshop so that we can talk more about budget discussions. And again, we can see if we did get any take back from state aid in that look-back period. So those were my thoughts.

Mr. Nolin: Okay, thank you. Any other comments from other Board members?

Mr. Pascale: From listening to remarks of the Governor, it just seems as though we'll be uncertain as far as state aid goes. I don't know how long, but what we'll get through, maybe the entirety of our process and still not know about our, our biggest source of revenue and that's state aid. It puts us in a really difficult position, especially if we're, and I don't know how we wouldn't be. talking about reductions when, when we're still uncertain of our state aid.

Dr. Spring: Absolutely, Mark, This is unprecedented. And the impact on schools, and you know, every aspect of our life in New York State and in our country is being impacted. It's very difficult to plan. It's really difficult to plan right now. There's no question about that. Especially with these additional look-back periods, which could even make our situation even more dire.

Mrs. Carey: Jennifer this is Nadia. I'm curious about the Thoughtexchange. What's the timeline on that? Is it going to happen prior to the additional conversations with staff?

Dr. Spring: Yes. So this is something that actually Guilderland piloted and they had good results and people were chiming in. It's an app from a phone. So it's very easy to get that in place and our BOCES is, you know, someone who can help us with that. So, it was an offer from our BOCES, and I think it's something to look into. And if we can get it going, we can get it going soon. So I don't mean to put words in Aaron's mouth, but I'm very interested and with Aaron's help, I think we can do it pretty soon.

Mrs. Carey: So, it's just an interactive platform, like a Bulletin board type.

Dr. Spring: So, basically, we could ask about their thoughts on the budget, then people put in responses and then other people would rate them.

Mrs. Carey: Understood. So, I guess what I'm asking is we have to sort of, put the pedal to the metal on this. Yes if you're looking for a budget vote in ten days...we are not finalized reductions or program cut or anything like that. And we would prefer to have the community's input before we make those decisions. Correct?

Dr. Spring: Well, so the budget's, the budget, you know, our spending plan has to match our revenue. So that's what you saw this evening. But, yes. And what that actually looks like as far as program services and staffing. Yes, we can absolutely use Thoughtexchange to gain input on that.

Mrs. Carey: Great. So, just keep us apprised of the timeline of that please.

Dr. Spring: Thank you. Absolutely.

Mrs. Giller: This is Margaret. So, I have questions on that too. It seems like there's going to have to be a quick turnaround on that like Nadia said. How are we going to advertise this as an available resource to engage our community and without us having like us having... we have

no specific information is just \$1.1 million in instruction and that's it. It's not we, there's no tangibles here for us to know what we're talking about For cuts...so we need to look at this

Dr. Spring: So I can share with you what does that mean. Okay so as far as there's a difference between a cut that's not based on a retirement or a position that, you know, somebody maybe left the district, we would call that attrition. So, totally, we, you know, again so what that would equal is 15.5 positions cut. In addition it would be 5.5 positions that would not be filled that those would be lost to attrition so that's 21 positions. And then, additionally, 1.5 positions lost to grants that either expired or were restructured in some way that could not support those positions any longer. So, that's what the total impact could look like.

Mrs. Giller: Based on further discussions with the administrative team? I just don't feel like this presentation is, like, we have moved forward very far from two weeks ago.

Dr. Spring: Right. So, so we have made further... Obviously, we've had further discussions with our administrative team to review the class size data. We do have additional recommendations for reductions and positions. And that is the number that I, I'm giving you. And there are things for obviously the Board to continue to discuss

Mrs. Giller: Then that's going to happen on May fifth...we're going have a breakdown of what each of these things are?

Dr. Spring: So, we can discuss some of those things now and we can also continue the discussion into Tuesday.

Mrs. Giller: Okay, I mean, like I said, I feel like these, this is not I mean, I get that there is an amount that you have identified here in each of the areas. But like I said, this is not tangible information. Like, transportation is that all CDTA bussing stopped and all field trip stopped? I don't know.

Dr. Spring: So it's a reduction of CDTA. Again, this is a Board decision. What would the Board like to do with, for example CDTA, elementary band? We had a retirement, so, is that something the Board is looking to fill? Is that something that we're looking to cut due to the attrition of our retirement? Again, I think the goal is to be able to provide as strong a quality education as possible. So, we can look at band and say, well, if we eliminate elementary band, there's basically... we're cutting the program almost in half and the feeder program. So, these are things that the Board, you know, we would like to discuss and get input from the Board. I know teacher leaders came up. So again, that's something... so these are hard conversations to have because there's so much value in each one of these areas. So I understand completely. Especially when we look at Next Gen standards, we look at the continuity of learning time during this closure in the virtual learning. The teacher leaders have provided significant leadership with their departments and half of the teacher leader positions are grant funded. But these are things to discuss as well.

Mrs. Giller: I mean, I think that we're still kind of thinking that there was going to be some sort of, you know, a meeting taking place with the, all of the administrative team talking about

reductions. But that was like, a month ago. You know yeah. Now it looks like we have two weeks to make all these decisions, but none of these conversations have happened this, you know.

Dr. Spring: So, yeah, so we have had conversations with our admin team. We discussed all of this. We went through and they gave us recommendations for further reductions. So that's where I'm getting this number from.

Mrs. Giller: So, are those reductions presented to us?

Dr. Spring: I haven't gone, I have not discussed with staff who potentially will be losing a position. I have not done that at this point.

Mark Pascale: If I can, it's Mark. So, I, I believe what Margaret's looking for, and I am as well, is a listing of the possible reductions. But I would like to see the recommendations. And I know when I say recommendations, I understand that no one wants to see any of these; but these are areas that if we have to come up with a certain amount of money that our administrative team would suggest this is where it come from. But I'd like to see a list extend beyond that so as the Board is deliberating over what stays or what goes, we're looking at an extensive list of services and costs that are not mandated that were cuts could come from. And which of those would be proposed by our management team.

Dr. Spring: I can do that for you for May 5th.

Mr. Pascale: I would also want to give consideration... given that things are evolving as they are, I personally think we should give ourselves as much time as we can, and later rather than earlier I don't know what the, absolute point is that we need a budget established, but I'd like to give ourselves as much time as we can. These are going to be painful decisions.

Dr. Spring: Agreed, and part of difficulty is that things are changing so quickly. but we still haven't gotten a definitive answer from the Governor on the timeline and on when the budget vote is going to be held and how that is going to be held as well. But I understand

Mr. Pascale: In the meantime that would give us more time correct?

Dr. Spring: Potentially,

Mr. Pascale: The vote is pushed back so our whole timeline will likely give us more.

Dr. Spring: Potentially, potentially...But, for the May 5 budget workshop, I can have all the lists of positions and I can also have the list and also a list of other areas to consider.

Mrs. Giller: Can we get that ahead of time? It's hard to, you know, like just getting this budget presentation, you know, we don't have time to actually dig into anything and, you know, these conversations really need to be productive. If we're going be held to a timeline. And this is obviously not going to be an easy decision for any of these things, and I want to be able to have

the time to take and consider what needs consideration. You know, I mean, we have that we will look at every opportunity that we possibly can, but, you know, I like, and I know that, because we're in this virtual world. I feel like it's a little rushed, you know, that we don't have the time to go through the materials. So, if we get it before the May 5 meeting, that would be better. I would appreciate it.

Mrs. Dion: This is Sue Dion. Dr. Spring did you have and have you had conversations with any staff members that there are cuts that you're sure are going to happen? That's what I understand. There are some cuts here that you believe are going to happen have all those staff members been part of a discussion with you or not?

Dr. Spring: So remember, there are basically two phases. The first phase was the pre-Covid-19 phase and we had remember we had discussions with those individuals. So we will circle back with them and just tell them. Yes, this is, you know, this is happening and then there are the next the additional phase from the new state aid runs.

Mrs. Dion: And I think that was my question. You had told us, you had talked you know you had discussions with some staff members. But have you had additional staff members... discussions... with additional staff members, besides the initial ones?

Dr. Spring: Not the ones from the phase two.

Mrs. Dion: Okay. So when I know you can't... you can't say definitely because we haven't had the discussion, but are there maybe some staff members out there that should they should be told it's a possibility?

Dr. Spring: Yes. So, I think, you know, me how I like to be upfront with people and that was my approach in phase one. I'm, not looking to withhold any information about people. I understand completely. So, yes, that is the next step is to tell people that, you know, these are possibilities and yes I can do that.

Mrs. Dion: And that will happen before May 5th?

Dr. Spring: So I can tell them absolutely that it's a possibility and then we can finalize things on May 5th? How does that sound?

Mrs. Dion: Well, that's fine. It's just, you know, I know people are wondering, is it me, you know, I mean, just I understand we don't wanna rattle anybody full pandemic. I understand it stressful one up for our teachers and staff members, but you know we're heading into May here. In all fairness, am I on the chopping block or not.

Dr. Spring: And we have been working quickly and I understand that we're not there completely yet. There's a lot of obviously you know discussion and thought that goes into making each one of these decisions. It's nothing that's made quickly. But yes, I will follow up on all of those points.

Mrs. Dion: Thank you.

Mrs. Carey: Jennifer: This is Nadia. I have a question about did we exhaust the ERS and TRS reserve this year and there's a double digit or even a single digit next year we know that the aid is probably going to be bleak again what happens?

Dr. Spring: So this is really a multiyear budget constraint and budget challenge. I know that we are, we're on track where we're trending favorably to have a savings this year because of the, the closure, which is, I believe, \$317,000. If we do not get a take back from state, we could put that into replenish those reserves. But if we do get less monies in foundation aid from the state, then that savings will have to obviously help us meet that that additional shortfall for us. But it's a concern, it's a huge concern for us.

Mrs. Carey: So, we don't, we don't have a plan to address next year. We're just trying to cover I mean, the Governor came out on what Sunday, he said fifty up to fifty percent, then on Tuesday, he clarified it and said it could run twenty percent additional aid cut for education. That's a lot of money for us that decimates the district. Are we planning on using the savings from this year...this year's closures to cover that potential twenty additional percent?

Dr. Spring: Yes, yes.

Mrs. Mackey: That twenty percent reduction and in state aid would be \$3.3 million. So that's more than our fund balance.

Mrs. Carey: And it triples our existing gap. So these painful decisions that we haven't made yet on the small gap quadruples?

Mrs. Mackey: Yeah. A fifty percent reduction would be over 8 million dollars. So, when we talked on BOCES calls these calls, the guidance from all other school districts is we would have to take a look at how we're providing instruction. And it would look much different. It couldn't look the same. It just simply couldn't.

Mrs. Giller: This is Margaret, so I just looked at the ERS TRS. Was this part of our five-year plan or are we're doing this for the first time now because of the situation that we're in depleting these reserves?

Mrs Mackey: So the ERS initially was going to be exhausted in this school year, but we didn't use it last year. So we actually prolonged that one year. Unfortunately, we just established TRS and we're using it in the upcoming budget. So that was not part of the five-year plan. We did not use debt service...Excuse me.. at all and the proposed plan. So we do have \$1.8 roughly left in that reserve. And the only other reserves that we really have after this proposed budget would be Avlar and we do have retirement incentives in our contracts which would be funded through the Avlar reserve and we do expect a number of retirements next year. That will help. And that is already included in the long-range plan. That assumption that breakage assumption was already included in the long range plan, but we do have a reserve to fund those incentive. So really it's just going to be a way of attack certiorari reserve. Again that reserve is what we

anticipate for the cases that are known worker's comp there be a balance of about \$175,000 remaining and then it's just going to be the debt service reserve that'll be remaining .

Mrs. Mackey: Stacy may I ask a question? This is Sue. Is next year the last year of the contract that the incentive is being offered?

Mrs. Mackey: So, excuse me next year CTA contract, right? So it'll have to be renegotiated. Yep. The CSEA contract has language where they're paid out whether they leave for another job or if they retire. So that's in the life of the contract. Yeah.

Mrs. Dion: Thank you.

Mrs. Giller: Stacey, this is Margaret. I have another question. We're looking at transportation cuts. Now, we had discussed that. We had to go back out to bid for that contract have we made any progression there or are we going to bid?

Mrs. Mackey: Yes. I'm working on it. Actively working on it.

Mrs. Giller: Okay.

Mrs. Mackey: I haven't finalized that yet, though. That timeline.

Mrs. Giller: Okay, and then the use of these funds, I mean, is this I know that we have employed Dr. Timbs as a consultant in the past. Has he been in review of any of this information? Are these recommendations? I mean, we're paying we've paid for services. I want to know if he has participated in any of this and if these are based on recommendations from both yourself and from him?

Mrs. Mackey: And actually over the past couple of weeks on revising the long range plan and yeah. So it's clear it's clear that we need to make these reductions as we discussed in the fall just the cash position. We were really using our reserves and our fund balance to balance our budget. We can't continue on that path, and we were in a one to two year trajectory. So these adjustments have to be made. He absolutely agrees with that. It's really the state aid piece is uncertain. It's something that we haven't experienced before and something that we're going to have to plan for; and again, this is going be a multiyear situation, Again with the retirement incentive, I do think that we'll have some breakage and that will help; but as you know, we have \$775,000 that we're using for ERS and TRS reserves, and we won't have those reserves next year. So, right away, that's a \$775,000 revenue shortfall and then we don't know what's going to be happening state aid. So this is going to be a multiyear situation. Absolutely. And yes, he agreed with all these things we've discussed over the past two weeks. Yep.

Mrs. Giller: It's Margaret still. Another question course recommendations. As far as I know the high school was not complete with finishing their counseling meetings. Like, we were in the middle of doing all of that when we closed. So, we're talking about looking at class sizes, but we haven't had meetings for next year. How is that happening? Are they doing them virtually? Or is that work still going on?

Dr. Spring: They've completed all of their meetings with their students and you remember Mrs Gaber recently had a baby. So her colleagues met with the remainder of her students on her caseload, her ninth graders. So that happened and we've already reviewed our course selections and we've already reviewed staffing. We've already eliminated elective, so actually, we are very far along in that process; and I've already determined where those reductions can be made based on recommendations from the high school administrative team. So, I also wanted to say that this recent phase two there are eight additional cuts including those lost to attrition in addition to what we already have. So, the majority of these positions, were already communicated in the phase one before Covid-19 and now there are eight additional ones since then. So, to put it into perspective. But yes, we're very happy with our counseling department that they were able to do all of this and they've done a great job.

Mr. Pascale: As we're looking at the scheduling process and making judgments, what we can offer what we can offer they will all be part of the potential listing that the Board will get as soon as we can. That will show reductions that again the team would put forward. But then potential reductions beyond that because there may be items that the Board feels we can live without and maybe the management team doesn't. So we'll be able to see a list that would go beyond what's being recommended to other possibilities.

Dr. Spring: Absolutely.

Mr. Pascale: So what I would look for would be the services. And within the reason, if there's any such thing as reason anymore, but these are areas that we're not mandated to offer, but we do offer. And also, I think it's time, you know, we're going to have to, as Stacy alluded to, we may have to look at instructional methodologies differently than we ever have before. For example, there could be classes-higher end classes- we want to offer; but we can't afford the staffing, and we may look for other ways to deliver instruction. I can see districts coming together and having the instruction put out by whatever the location is. And several schools come together and share the cost. I think we're going to need to look at ways that we haven't had to before. It may allow us to continue providing some courses that we possibly can't afford on our own but by partnering with other districts or colleges-I know there's colleges that broadcast-we do some of that already. We may need to look at doing more of that than we ever have before. I just think we're going to need to think differently on how we deliver instruction.

Dr. Spring: So, Mark, I completely agree with you. And these are discussions that I have every day with my superintendent colleagues and with our BOCES and Anita Murphy, because we do need a more regional approach. We're not going to survive otherwise. For example, AP calculus. So, we talked about that. How do we continue to offer our upper level courses our most rigorous program to all of our students. So we had two students who selected that for next year. Remember, we have still twenty-five students taking the majority of their courses at HVCC next year, but we want to still offer this opportunity to our students. So we are going to broadcast in for distance learning. But that was not an easy task for our principal, Brian Wood, to arrange because every high school has a different schedule. So when you talk about a regional approach, we need to have regional schedules so that we can allow for this collaboration on a much larger level than just each high school doing its own thing.

Mrs. Dion: Dr. Spring. This is Sue. What's going to happen? I am just thinking ahead to next year. Our juniors. Now take all these regents in their junior year and they've lost 3 months of instruction and they'll have to take these regents next year, where do we get them additional instruction to take those regents. How can we do that?

Dr. Spring: So let me just clarify your question. So, we talked to the regents last time remember. So, juniors, who are exempt let's say, from the US history example?

Mrs. Dion: Yes.

Dr. Spring: Okay. So the following year, they would take their economics and they take their government, so they wouldn't have a regents exam obviously to take unless they do not pass the courses we talked about. They do not go to summer school. Then yes they would be re-enrolled in the class starting all over again.

Mrs. Dion: So that could, that could adjust some class sizes. That's my point. That's where I was headed with that.

Dr. Spring: Absolutely. It could adjust some class sizes.

Mrs. Dion: Yes. With some overflow.

Dr. Spring: Yes it could change our numbers. And as you know from your experience in the school district that you try to get students to go to summer school right and sometimes that doesn't happen. And that does impact the scheduling for the next school year. So yes, we are aware of that.

Mr. Pascale: And I think summer school is going to be a topic for discussion. And we may need to get word out sooner rather than later that people shouldn't be depending on summer school. I'm not proposing that but it's going to be listed. It needs to be listed. We don't have to do summer school, and I understand the need for it, and I understand the arguments, but desperate times call for some desperate decisions and summer school might be one.

Dr. Spring: So, we hope all of our students pass Mark.

Mr. Nolin: Any other additional questions from Board members. Thank you all for asking great questions, so that I didn't have to chime in and ask any. I felt like all my things were answered by everybody else.

Mrs. Giller: So if you don't mind this is Margaret. Jennifer, I'm not sure if you told us when are you meeting with the admin team and is that meeting the one that you were talking about Nadia and Rick participating in?

Dr. Spring: So there are a few meetings this week. So admin council is tomorrow. So that's a standing meeting every Thursday afternoon, and I did meet with our leadership of our three

collective bargaining units. And one of the suggestions was to have a follow-up meeting to review the line-by-line budget as well as our BOCES services that we engage in. So, that is something that I've set up for Friday. And I have invited our two board members who are part of our budget committee to be a part of that if they're available, it's Friday at 3:00. So we can continue to look on a deeper more granular level as to what those items look like.

Mrs. Giller: Stacy, can you, so if we're looking at all programs, you know, because obviously we would prefer to keep people, because that's where, you know, what hear the need is. BOCES services and programs can you just talk to us? You know, how does this, you know, we get revenue return right from both these programs. So I'm just curious bang for our buck as far as, you know, when we're looking at different programs if there's aid differential in anything.

Mrs. Mackey: Yeah. There would be. If it's a, if it's a person, so it's capped at their salary, it's not the flat. I'll call it sixty percent aid as if it were a piece of equipment for example. So there is differential. Yes, that should be factored. Because it could have a revenue impact in the following year. So, yeah, so we're having those discussions. We want to take a look at exactly what we're talking about and what the revenue impact could be as well. Yep. That's a very good point Margaret.

Mrs. Giller: So, a person you said is just their salary?

Mrs. Mackey: It's capped at I want to say thirty-five thousand. Yeah. Yeah. And then so.

Mrs. Giller: For example, are CSE students. If we have kids that are attending a Vo-Tech Program.

Mrs. Mackey: So, salary wouldn't be impacted and that Special Ed is different. Special Ed is different. It's not through BOCES aid. It's through the private and public access crossfade their stackable. So, the BOCES would fall under the private access cost aid. So that's separate revenue.

Dr. Spring: Stacy can you explain the five-year averaging for our BOCES CTE program our student attendance?

Mrs. Mackey: Yeah. The BOCES CTE is built off five-year average. So say, for example, our numbers are high this year and next year, but were lower and years one, two and three; we would pay a reduced FTE count. But as those numbers grow and they have been growing. So, there is growth. So, even if we put a cap next year on the number of students that were to participate in Vo-Tech, it would take basically four years to catch up with us. Because of the five-year average.

Mrs. Giller: Well, I mean, this sounds like this is not a one and done problem. It sounds to me like, we're in for the long haul here. So I think, you know, some of those things need to be considered.

Mr. Pascale: Again about, I'm sorry it's Mark, About timeline, so we will be given these, possible reductions. And I would like to give give us as much time that we can. And what are what is the date that we would have to make the Board of Education we're going to have to make a final determination?

Dr. Spring: So that's still the unknown if we are looking to have our budget vote. Again what is that going to look like? Again these are unknowns for us. If that is to occur at the beginning of June, then we do need to turn in our property tax report card to the state and Stacey, do you know how many days before that has to happen before our budget vote? How many days is it twenty days?

Mrs. Mackey: Sorry, I'm looking at the timeline. I know the latest that any of our neighboring districts are taking action is the 13th that was Schenectady.

Dr. Spring: So, we could schedule a board meeting for the following week if we wanted to have additional time.

Mr. Pascale: I'm in favor of that not only because we're indecisive because there may be information then we don't have now.

Dr. Spring: So Mark, are you suggesting that instead of the May 5th meeting we turn our May 6 meeting into a budget workshop and then we schedule a board meeting for the following Wednesday for us for the Board to finalize the budget?

Mr. Pascale: Yes. It's personal... that would be my request.

Mrs. Annely: This is Helen by the way. I'm in the same boat as Mark. I think there's too many factors in the air right now, for us to say, May 6 has to be the date that we have it in. Inasmuch as we can prolong it out, I think we should.

Mrs. Dion: I agree.

Mr. Nolin: Me too.

Dr. Spring: So then we're looking at another Board meeting for May 13th, and we can add that in onto our website.

Mrs. Dion: So then you're saying the workshop is May 5th and then the follow up board meeting is May 13 or is the workshop May 6th?

Dr. Spring: May 6th. So we're cancelling May 5th and we'll stay with our Wednesdays. So May 6 will be our budget workshop and May 13 will be the Board Meeting when we'll finalize our budget.

Mrs. Carey: So I just let you know I will scan all the notes that that Rick and I take. So, everybody has it in advance of the next workshop.

Mr. Nolin: Perfect, thank you.

Mr. Pascale: Thank you.

Mr. Nolin: Any other Board comments? I do have a handful of public comments that I can get to if that's not the case.

Mrs. Dion: Is our is our meeting at 6:00 still?

Dr. Spring: Six o'clock. Correct.

Mrs Dion: Thank you.

Mr. Nolin: Okay. I'm going to jump into public comment. We can come back to Board comments if there is a need. So I got a handful of questions. I'm going to start with the first one here. A comment from Dave Pulaski and their question or comment was: "Given the current financial condition, we as a city, state and country are experiencing and with the Governor stating publicly on many occasions that he's going to be reducing state aid to schools, I want to know that the school board is not expecting taxpayers to fundraise for the various unions. As far as this individual knows, the teachers and principals at our district have never been asked to freeze their salaries or take a pay cut in order to close the budget gap. And that this individual's asking each member of the Board to state publicly that they support asking the teachers and principals to freeze their salaries for the next school year in an effort to minimize the impact to taxpayers as a result of the Governor's statements and actions." So that is Dave's question. I'll take an initial stab at some of that. We have already talked to, as Jennifer has alluded to, with starting conversations with the collective bargaining agreements or units. And we, as a Board, cannot just unilaterally decide that folks in any of the units will take a pay freeze for the next year. It's not something the Board has control over; but it is, you know, we are engaging our units in discussion and every possible way that we could reduce the impact to taxpayers and to our kids, who obviously need this education, and are going to need it even more as times, get more and more difficult. Does anyone have anything that they'd like to chime in for that question?

Mr. Pascale: I would just like to say that there's no opposition on the Board. We all are supportive of these negotiations, and we're trying to do the best we can. And there's no one on the Board that is suggesting we not meet with our unions and try to see if we can come to some agreement where we can save ourselves some money.

Mr. Nolin: And I will say in the past when I first got on the Board with around difficult times like this and our teachers did take a raise a flat raise that year, and then administrators have also helped in certain circumstances. And Jennifer, the Superintendent, volunteered for next year to take a pay cut to try to lead the way. So, it has happened in the past where we've been able to come to an agreement in these tough situations to the betterment of our kids to best deal with

the cards we're given. And I personally, I'm hopeful that we'll be able to have some sort of accommodation that we can all work to lessen the burden on our students.

Mrs. Giller: This is Margaret. I also just wanted to say that I appreciate the unity in the conversations having all three bargaining units having conversations together to show that this is a joint effort. But also just to note that these are just happening and it does take time for information to get out and decisions to be made. So, we're all trying to be patient and kind of hurry up and wait type of thing. But, these conversations are just beginning. So, even though we don't have information to share, we are again, taking look at everything very seriously and trying to work with everyone.

Mr. Nolin: Okay, I did have two questions from Megan Churbino. One is is about bussing. "Why are we not canceling the bus program? It has not had a significant impact on attendance and could save three teacher positions." So I know we are first wanted to see if there were reductions that we could get them to make, which was the 30% cut that Jennifer alluded to that we were able to negotiate with them. And then we're also looking at state aid as a possibility. But on top of that, the Board is not completely on the table with cutting it completely. It is one of the many levers that we can pull as we talk about what we need to do.

Dr. Spring: Just to clarify a point, so I did share with the Board that again, this is the Board's decision, but just to clarify on Megan's question, so CDTA did come back with a 30% reduction. So that is \$84,000. So that is less than what we originally had agreed to. The fact that ... So, it's not three teachers, I just want to be clear on that. And there's also the opportunity again to get aid on students who are traveling to HVCC. But again, are we going to be sending students to HVCC? So, it's even difficult to even talk about bussing to even know what kind of world in September we'll be going back to. But again, these are decisions that the Board will have to be discussing.

Mrs. Carey: Jennifer, can you can you pull together the attendance, the attendance rates year every year before bussing and after bussing? I think that's sort of what's going to help guide the decision about whether to keep or cut.

Dr. Spring: So, I think that we saw the most significant impact on the middle school, where students were becoming early riders, and they were continuing at the middle school. I think what we saw is that attendance at the high school is difficult with they're chronic absenteeism issues and did not solve our chronic absenteeism issues. But it did address safety for our students living on the island, and it also increased student mobility. But I can get you attendance data, but I don't think it's going to significantly show that there was an improvement at the high school. I think it did improve on-time arrival and that was most significant at the middle school.

Mrs. Giller: I also asked, this is Margaret, if we can get, I mean, you mentioned transportation aid for students that are attending Hudson Valley. As far as I know, that's only twenty-five students, and I don't know what transportation aid is on that, and if that's even significant enough for us to consider. So, is that a big figure you can also get to us just as we're considering?

Dr. Spring: I will.

Mrs. Mackey: I can do the work on the workup on that. This is Stacy.

Dr. Spring: So I don't know how we'll get the students to, but it's something well, we'll have to, you know, and the grant isn't going to pay for that, but it's something that we'll have to discuss.

Mrs. Giller: Right. But we can't keep an entire CDTA program for \$85,000 to get twenty-five kids to Hudson Valley.

Dr. Spring: I understand there is strong ridership and I'd be happy to provide that with you. But again, this is the Board's decision and the Board you know alone, we'll make that decision. But I will get that information for you.

Mrs. Carey: Yeah. If you would send the ridership to date along with your recommendation. That'd be great. Thanks.

Mrs. Giller: I mean, the hard thing is with the ridership is it doesn't give us detailed information like how many of those swipes are actually used to go to school. You know, we had a student at our Board meeting a month ago and says, you know, she said, I don't take the bus to school, but I bring it to work. I just feel like it's not accurate data.

Dr. Spring: So yes, the data we have total ridership by line: red, blue or green arrival to in the morning and dismissal time. How many students are using it totally. And then we have how many students are using the other lines. So the way the information comes to us is through their student IDs and then that has to be cross-reference to School Tool so that we can get a picture of which students are riding the bus, and I can get you that information.

Mr. Nolin: And so we do know that based on the lines that they're riding, if they're going to work or not? Because the line's only go, you know, basically the school,

Dr. Spring: We have that information. Yes.

Mrs. Carey: Does Hudson Valley provide their students with bus passes?

Dr. Spring: So, our students are... maybe Mark could help me here. They're, they're not matriculated students. So as far as I know, that wouldn't be an option. Mark, do you have any comment on that?

Mr. Pascale: I believe that...I know matriculated students that are in programs at the Hudson Valley are provided transportation. They get their student ID, gives them transportation. When we asked about this before, and I believe that the college in high school students did not, but these twenty-five kids are kind of a gray area. So I'm not sure Hudson Valley does provide transportation student IDs, work on the CDTA busses. And I'd have to find out, and I can look into it about this situation with our kids.

Mr. Nolin: So, a follow up question from Megan was: “The elementary buildings have given up library space, conference rooms, and are using every inch possible and that she felt that the middle school and high school have space that could be restructured and utilized in other ways to possibly bring back the offices from Page Ave. to a building?” I think there's a couple of different assumptions in this question, We've talked before, about you know, I think I have another question and separately about, where are we with, you know, could we sell page Avenue or not? And so that's a whole related somewhat related question as well. I don't know if anyone wants to respond.

Dr. Spring: I don't know if anyone wants to but I can get started. And then I'll have Stacy chime in. So, obviously this isn't a fix for tomorrow. So if we did sell the building, I'm not sure how much it's valued at then the proceeds from that would be used to offset debt service. Is that correct? Stacy can you talk about that a little bit?

Mrs. Mackey: Yeah, so any proceeds on the sale of a building would go to the debt service reserve. So it couldn't be used to pay for any operating expenditures. It would have to be used towards debt service of bond payments.

Mr. Nolin: And then as far as, you know, bringing back the offices that we have at Page to a building for, and hopes of, I assume, financial savings, I don't what we saw what conversation we had not that long ago. Maybe two or three Board of meetings back was that the middle school needed that space and were using it now, even though it's only partially correctly configured.

Dr. Spring: The middle school is utilizing that space. And remember part of the space. I mean, it was never renovated really for nice classroom space and part of it, the roof was leaking. So there was one classroom not even accessible because of that leakage. So, and then another issue is, I'm going to say students safety. I mean, so, we were on the third floor and people going to taxpayers vendors anybody coming to our offices had to go through the entire building. So , I wouldn't recommend that space. But if there are other opportunities or other ideas, people have for a different space, I think that we can definitely consider that having our own entrance is something that it would be really important to do. But, definitely if there are other ideas, and obviously we need to stay together that does help to facilitate our own collaboration. So, we're open for ideas. Absolutely.

Mr. Nolin: Yeah, so my understanding is we have not found a configuration that would save us money or work better or work just as well. And that's as far as moving things from Page Avenue.

Mrs. Giller: So this is Margaret. I'm curious to know what the operating cost savings would be if we were to relocate. Because the truth is that those offices were in that building for I don't even know how long, but, I mean, I understand that you're saying there's a safety issue with having people but you did it for twenty years. I don't think that there was really much of an issue, but, you know, if we're relocating, we've just, you know, the conversations that we're

talking about of, you know, having to cut staff is probably going to open up some areas that could be considered.

Mrs. Dion: So Dr. Spring there is a separate entrance. The only issue would be the elevator, but there was a separate entrance in the back. I don't know how, you know, we're to climb the stairs to those offices. I don't know how. The security would work on entering the building there. I mean, that's I don't know how that would work either, but the only issue would be the elevator for those who would need to come up via the elevator to the third floor, right? I mean, they could use this separate entrance unless an elevator was necessary

Dr. Spring: For visitors. Sue for visitors?

Mrs. Dion: Yes.

Dr. Spring: It's something to explore. Definitely. I know that when districts are looking to cut their expenses, they close buildings. So I think it's definitely something that we need to explore and see what the possibilities could be. So, I definitely think it's something to look into.

Mr. Pascale: I'd like to put an operational price tag on it. I don't, I'm not sure the sale of the building we can, we can't do much with that. We have no idea, and as Stacy said, it wouldn't help us operationally. So just to know what would be the savings. What would the savings be? If and I think it's because we have to figure out how we can do this. If we relocated our administration back in, we're building what would be safe.

Mrs. Mackey: I can do mock up with that. That was Stacey,

Mrs. Carey: So, my question is about Page Avenue is we could look at in addition to the operational costs as it is but also the feasibility of perhaps moving maybe the Van Schaick, Pre-K into that building or putting some students back the building becomes aidable I believe at that point.

Dr. Spring: Stacy, can you clarify that? I mean, we're not looking at any building projects on that.

Mrs. Carey: Well, there's two spaces downstairs that are great spaces if we're looking at social distancing, there's a ton of room. If we put two classes to Pre-K classes or two other kinds of classes in that space, we're freeing up some of the room and the building so that if we have to space kids out, when we go back. It's an option,

Dr. Spring: It's something to consider. Absolutely.

Mr. Nolin: If I remember correctly previously the last time we looked there were only certain spaces in the building that were up to code for having students in them. And I can't remember off the top of my head what that was. But I feel like there were only some of the spaces that could be classroom space without construction to renovate them.

Mrs. Giller: This is Margaret, but we could have a potential of renting this space, which would bring us revenue.

Mr. Nolin: We had rented it before but we lost those tenants and that's where the, like, part of all of this evolution happened when we migrated.

Dr. Spring: That was an in-kind relationship, so we didn't receive any rental monies, but it benefited the students of the school district and the family. Yes.

Mr. Nolin: So another question we got from the public is from Bill Smith, "In these unordinary times knowing knowing the two percent cap is strangling not only schools, but cities would we consider going over the tax cap with hopes of saving jobs?" And I know I brought this up months ago, you know, what would the range look like; and I believe if we were to try to save everything, we'd be looking at, like, a twelve to fifteen percent increase in local taxpayers portion which just isn't, you know, anywhere feasible for what we could ask people to do. And so it, you know, we're already asking for 2.5 or whatever the number that Stacy mentioned earlier. To go beyond that we would, at least personally, I feel like we were already cutting so much. It would, it would be so hard to figure out what to add for that little bit that we could go above. I don't really know that how we would make that argument.

Mr. Pascale: Coming out of this, this pandemic the damage is going to be far and wide and people are not going to be in a good place financially. And it comes back to the question that I've had for most of my life--Why is it that only the school budget is going to be voted on? So we're going to have a situation where people are in trouble, and there's only one budget they can vote down. So, I'm concerned about budgets our budget; and I think far and wide budgets are going to be serious concern. I think if we ever go above the cap then I would be really, really worried if we can pass a budget if we go over the cap. I'm concerned if we can pass a budget anyway and it won't have a lot to do with the school it'll just have to do with the economics that people face in general. I wish they could vote on all their budgets. But they can't. They can only vote on one budget and it's going to be a challenge to get budgets passed this year.

Mr. Nolin: The last question is more of a comment I have is from Lynette McGovern which is: "Would you be able to look pre-CDTA and post-CDTA to see if the bus improved attendance at all in addition to ridership? And if we have seen an increase in attendance, it should be something we consider keeping but if it hasn't, then maybe it's something we can put to the side as a cost saver." I think that's the information that we have gotten some of that previously again. Maybe three board meetings ago, but I think if we get that again, that's essentially what we we're requesting Jennifer.

Dr. Spring: Absolutely. I can get that for you. Yeah, I'll get that information. So Lynette's comments or similar to what Nadia was saying. Yeah. So, I do, I want to say the strongest ridership line was the line to Van Schaick Island. But so I think the students on the Island were definitely taking advantage of that, but I can get that information to you.

Mr. Nolin: Yeah, I think specifically the ridership in addition to the attendance data, so that we can look at them together.

Mrs. Giller: Hi, this is Margaret. Would it benefit us to look at only bussing the Island? I mean could we offer that as a solution?

Dr. Spring: That might work.

Mrs. Giller: And what would that cost would be? I can tell. I think that, you know, like Mark said, we, we really have to take the time to go through all of this. You know, I mean, obviously the safety of our kids is important, and we want to make sure that, you know, we're getting them to school safely that they're using it for school. So, if we could get an idea of what the cost savings would be, if we just had one run as well.

Dr. Spring: So, what I would also like to do is prepare this information for next week's business our May 6 board meeting. So that I can share this with everybody. So, a lot of the questions that were brought up. So that's how I would like to approach this to give it to the Board, but also share it with everybody at our next meeting.

Mrs. Dion: Yes, this is Sue I wanted to ask that same question. Margaret did about could we break it down with just Van Schaick Island students on that bus? Do we know out of the twenty five students? Do we have a general idea of how many of those really take the bus to Hudson Valley? Like do you have that on the top of your off the top of your head, or No? I mean, I feel some drive. I don't know. I'm asking.

Dr. Spring: So, again, I think some kids will probably drive, but again, how to be equitable in opportunities. So that was the concern there.

Mrs. Annely: This is Helen. Can we look at what stops have the most swipes by any chance. Like, what bus stops specifically get the most swipes?

Dr. Spring: I can assign the lines. For example, green goes to Van Schaick and we've got the blue line which goes around Manor and then up around McDonald Drive. That one is the least that has the lowest participation,

Mrs. Annely: But that's the whole line. So we can't look at specific stops where the bus stops and say people from this general area might take it more than maybe people from this general area.

Dr. Spring: So, the strongest ridership is from the red line, you know, the Saratoga Sites, Remsen Street you know, coming up Roulier Heights and then, you know, the green line from Van Schaick. Those are the two lines that are you know, the most popular.

Mrs. Annely: Okay.

Mrs. Giller: Jennifer, maybe also, the potential of bus passes, if we, you know, would we have room and the FRP Grant if we were to get, you know, if, if we couldn't figure out the situation, where has the Hudson Valley to just get bus passes for a few kids?

Dr. Spring: We can see about that. You know, unfortunately, they're not rolling monies over. It ends June 30, I mean, maybe we can have an advanced purchase. I don't know, but I can look into that. Yeah.

Mr. Nolin: With that, I think that ends our comment period on the agenda. If we could get a motion to adopt tonight's consent agenda from the Board,

Mrs. Dion: I'll make a motion . **Mrs. Carey** – I'll second.

District Clerk: Roll Call - Mrs. Giller-Yes, Mr. Pascal- Yes, Mrs. Annely-Yes, Mr. Jackson-Yes, Mrs. Dion-Yes, Mrs. Cary-Yes and Mr. Nolin-Yes.

Mr. Nolin: Is there any comment from the Board on anything at all that we didn't cover in the previous comment period?

Mrs. Annely: This is Helen, I just want to so....reading the writing on the wall and I appreciate Gov Cuomo isn't coming out and saying that he wants to close school for the remainder of the year, but somewhat looking at it, I think that some of us can anticipate that the worst might actually happen and my huge concern with the safety of some of our students. I mean we have amazing social workers in the district, but their hands are kind of tied when these kids are at home and they can't really speak freely or contact somebody freely. And I'm very concerned about these kids for six months, possibly being in a situation where they have nowhere to go for safety. In considering this and thinking about this, if we have a plan or trying to come up with a plan?

Dr. Spring: So Helen, we share your concerns, and we've actually have a system in place where we have teams of staff members in buildings who are reaching out to students. So we're doing our best to try to reach out to our kids and also reaching out to those students who we know we're vulnerable to begin with in vulnerable situations and difficult situations. But I think this is what we're all worried about this. We definitely are in the longer we're closed and it becomes even more worrisome. But we are trying to reach out, and again there were students that we weren't able to get in touch with. So we're now partnering with the city and trying to deliver messages that way to these families so that they can contact us. Any other ideas please let us know.

Mrs. Annely: Well, I was just wondering I know you talked about Thoughtexchange, but the idea of maybe a child being able to text as opposed to call. Is that something that we've looked at where they can get on a device and maybe contact somebody as opposed to doing it vocally and out loud?

Dr. Spring: So I do know that students do text their teachers and I believe there is this ongoing communication, so I'm going to reach out. Peg do you have anything you wanted to add about this?

Ms. O'Shea: Yes, so students are also able to reach out through Google Classroom to their teachers. So that's a vehicle as well.

Mrs. Annely: Okay

Ms. O'Shea: This is an area we're continuing to explore, and we've also had some discussions at grade level meetings too about, you know, so yes. Safety concerns, but also proactive reaching out to parents who might be having trouble structuring the learning day. So recommendations from teachers and then reaching out in those areas as well.

Mrs. Annely: I know there was also discussion about a lot of our students just simply not being able to be found. Are we finding out that a lot of our kids weren't in the district to begin with?

Ms. O'Shea: Well, so right now I can tell you at the elementary level between the three elementary schools that number is down to twelve. The single ... high school is, although that thirty two is now in the twenty high twenties. I believe. So that's why we're enlisting Jim Ward and primarily for the secondary and continuing. We had a few students who are in Troy. We just delivered a Chromebook to Schenectady to Watervliet. Those are unique situations. They're still our students on our roles to the end of the year.

Mrs. Annely: So when we're keeping in touch with parents, when it comes to, I know with things financially with a lot of these families, some of these kids might not be able to stay in their housing period and I just want to make sure that these kids, if they happen to have to move between districts, don't fall completely through the cracks, either as they come in or they leave.

Ms. O'Shea: Yeah. And Alaina is registering students as they come in, you know, or policies. If someone moves in the fourth quarter, they can remain with us, so we are continuing to work with these students and reach out for various venues.

Mrs. Annely: All right. Thank you.

Mrs. Dion: I'm sorry, Peggy. So, did you what was the number for the middle school? You kind of broke up and I didn't get that

Dr. Spring: One.

Mrs. Dion: Okay.

Dr. Spring: A students we believe moved.

Mrs. Giller: So just a thought this is Margaret. Helen I hear what you're saying and obviously it is a huge concern, I'm glad to hear that we have gotten in contact with a lot more students over the past weeks. I'm wondering if it might be possible to have one central, maybe one central phone line, one dedicated phone line. For example, in Mechanicsville we have a phone that is assigned, you know, we have secretaries coming in, on rotation and that one person is assigned to be answering the phones. Because, you know, if parents do have questions and need to reach out. Yes, emails are great but, you know, we do still have some people that are not connected and, you know, if it's possible to even have one type of a central location for someone to know that somebody is going to answer the phone, you know, we've had situations we've had fires in the city in the last weeks. You know, are we reaching out to those families

and making sure that they're set up and they're good to go? You know, different types of things like that? And, like, Helen said, reading the writing on the wall doesn't seem like we're going back next week. So just wondering if we could be thoughtful about how to have a centralized collection of information and someone to be a main contact. And then I just also had a question as to how we're collecting attendance data. How are you guys being able to see who's attending?

Dr. Spring: So, again, I'm going to have Peg talk about this. I mean, it's different at the elementary level versus secondary. You want to talk about elementary and the classroom.

Ms. O'Shea: Yeah, and if I could just go back to the first question in terms of the phone contacts. Just so you know, administrators, secretaries, social workers all of our phone messages also transcribe to our emails. So, we are able to see when we get a message on our phone at school even if we're not there. We also send the directions out for everyone. So they do know how to contact their voicemail. But we'll continue to explore other ways. But I did want you to know that our messages are and we have alerts on her emails. In terms of the attendance, it's something we're working on because at the elementary and Google Classroom, once they sign on you know if they've connected or not. But once they connect once that's it there in the system, I'm going to have to block my microphone in a minute, but I can tell you that we're looking at it more in terms of the elementary of work that is being submitted. Who's attending the live Google meets. I know all of the principals and all the buildings have contact logs and teachers are communicating with principals on a regular basis. And then, even if someone isn't submitting work for a period of time. I know that teachers and principals are reaching back out so attendance is a little different in this virtual world. Then at the secondary level again they can tell from Schoology who I believe, have signed on a regular basis. Not just connected who's, like, with Google Classroom, but also through work submission.

Mrs. Giller: Thank you Peg. I'm wondering if that might be something that we can communicate to our families as far as the phone situation that you are still receiving messages.

Dr. Spring: Yeah, I believe we did. We did send out contact information it is on the website for all the principals and the buildings, but I think that's a great idea to do it again. Absolutely.

Ms. Shea: And then also back to know that we're in the continuity of learning plan, we just had conversations with the principals too about Blackboard Connect reminding parents and students that this work that they're doing priority standards, builds upon future learning for next year. So, we're working on, you saw the video from the high school, middle school. We're working on advertising that as well to make sure parents understand and students the importance of connecting.

Ms. Annely: This is Helen again. Just one more thing to comment on. We also, I mean, are we considering too that some of our kids are kindergarteners and first graders and second graders, and can't don't know that they have to contact anybody if anything's wrong. It's just like I said, their safety is just such a huge concern of mine right now, because we know that we have vulnerable kids in the district and I just want to make sure that they're all being basically accounted for.

Dr. Spring: Yeah, I would say that our elementary teachers are really doing an outstanding job of really connecting with their students and families. So thank you.

Mr. Nolin: Just on that though, maybe we could investigate other external services or groups that provide, like, a text hotline or things that we might, we might be able to partner with, where maybe not even reach our staff first. But, if there's like a statewide or national hotline or something, we can provide them to something they could text. I think that's worth looking at. And then, maybe we could work with those groups to provide that. Or they could somehow inform us if there was a concern that we needed to follow up on. With that I do have two more general public comments that I wanted to get to. The first is from Natalie Partyka which was "If it's decided that bussing will stop what about having cross guards on 787 it's not considered a highway anymore, correct?" That was a question that they were asking.

Dr. Spring: The cross guards are under the employ of the city. So again, that would be a city decision.

Mr. Nolin: But it is something we can talk to them about definitely... if we do look to end the CDTA program or some kind of solution, if we can come to one, that's definitely want to consider. The other comments that we received from is from Deanna Kelly, which states that it's Administrative Professionals day on behalf of the administrators. We would like to thank all of our administrative assistants. We cannot thank them enough for everything that they do to take care of us and our students with a special shout out to Mary Rumsey for dealing with everyone. I'll tackle that and say, thank you to all our administrative assistants and thank you, Deanna for bringing it up. I believe that brings us to the end of our regular portion of our meeting. Our next meeting is scheduled for May 6 live at 6 PM and we will follow that up at May 13 also at six o'clock. Could I get a motion to enter into executive session at 7:41 to discuss collective bargaining with our three bargaining units.

Mrs. Annely: I'll make a motion this is Helen.

District Clerk: Is there a second? Who's that?

Mrs. Carey: I'll second?

District Clerk: Okay thanks. Just for a quick roll call.

Mrs. Giller-Yes, Mr. Pascale-Yes, Mrs. Annely-Yes, Mr. Jackson-Yes, Mrs. Dion-Yes, Mrs. Carey-Yes and Mr. Nolin-Yes.

Mr. Nolin: That concludes the general part of our public meeting and for Board members we'll take a ten-minute break get to executive session around 7:50 or so. Thank you everyone for attending and listening.