

Highline Public Schools | School Board Meeting - February 15, 2023

Well, good evening, everybody. Welcome to our school board meeting on Wednesday, February 15. Please stand up for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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.

Thank you. Roll call, please.

Director Howell?

Here.

Director Alvarez?

Here.

Director Hagos?

Here.

Director Van?

Here.

And Director Garcia has an excused absence. And Dr. Duran is at a conference. OK, 1.4, any changes or additions to our board meeting agenda?

If the directors don't have any questions, I'd like to request that we move 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, and 8.6 into the consent agenda.

I'll second that.

All in favor?

Aye.

Any opposed? We have none. So we're going to move 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, and 8.6 to our consent agenda. Thank you. OK, moving on up. We're going to recognitions. Tonight, we're going to be recognizing Choose 180. Kisa?

OK, did you see him yet? OK, he said he is on his way. He is coming from his board meeting. So hopefully he walks in. And if not, it'll just be awkward.

So good evening. I am here to recognize community partner Choose 180. And I'll just give you a brief introduction. Choose 180 has been a partner with Highline since 2018. We were the first school district that they partnered with.

Choose 180 is an organization that primarily works in the juvenile justice system. They support students who have made some mistakes in helping them do divergence programs to get them back on track.

So they wanted to take that model and replicate it in the school systems for students who make mistakes in the school system and may have some discipline to help them learn how to make better choices. I will also share that Sean Goode, the executive director of Choose 180-- he should be here any second-- really helped found a grassroots movement that was happening with the organization and turn it into a 501(c)(3).

He is unfortunately leaving the organization after several years, moving on. But I want you to know that the person, Sean Goode-- I can't come up here and talk about Choose 180 without talking about Sean Goode.

He has really given his heart and soul to the Highline community beyond just the Choose 180 program. He started working with us when he worked for the YMCA with the Live and Free program. He has supported us through mediation and facilitating community meetings during difficult times when there was a rise in community violence.

He continues to support with helping us mediate difficult conversations with families. And so I just wanted to acknowledge him, also the organization Choose 180 but also recognize the person Sean Goode. He's not here. But he'll be here in a second.

Well, if it's OK with the board, I would love to have a point of privilege when he does show up that we will give him an opportunity to come on up here.

Thank you.

So thank you so much, Kisa.

All right, that's it for recognitions this evening. Until he shows up, we're going to move on to scheduled communications for our community. We have our board meeting norms up as well as our public testimony rules. So I'm going to call everybody up here and give you an opportunity to speak to the board. First up, Darany Pen.

Hi, my name is Darany Pen. I am a community member that has lived in SeaTac for 20-plus years. I am a Highline educator with 12-plus years of service and currently a founding teacher at Highline Virtual Elementary School. I'm also a proud Highline parent.

As a community member, educator, and parent, I have always been impressed with Highline's commitment to know every student by name, strength, and need. Our district strives to think out of the box to offer programs within our schools that support students and families to achieve their goals.

Last Wednesday at a staff meeting, I was surprised and saddened by the announcement from HR that HVE would be collapsed due to low enrollment and would be moved to Seahurst Elementary for the next school year. It is to my knowledge that stakeholders, students, parents, staff, and our administration had no opportunity to weigh in on this decision.

With my past experience on the workforce development and planning team in Highline, I understand the need to collapse programs due to low enrollment and that some fiscal decisions are a hard call. If HVE will no longer exist, I think it's important for myself, as a stakeholder, to explain the costs.

First is leadership. We are potentially losing a seasoned innovative administrator that understands the needs of teaching and learning in a virtual setting. We were told that we would need to display staff who are as diverse as the student population we serve, staff members who committed and are invested in the success of Highline's first virtual elementary school.

Furthermore, we are disrupting the current and future continuity of our programming for our students and families. I'd like the board to know that our school, although small, is very mighty. Our students have made growth. Our families are happy. And our staff culture and climate is one of trust and respect.

I'm asking the school board to please gather stakeholders' input prior to deciding on the future of HVE. Regardless of location, I'm hoping that you will consider keeping Highline Virtual Elementary as a school with its current principal and staff so that we have more time and the opportunity to grow. Thank you.

Thank you. Next up, Hillary Britt.

Hello, my name is Hillary Britt. And I'm a teacher/librarian for Highline Virtual Elementary. I'm here tonight to ask you to reconsider the recent decision to collapse HVE as a school. It is not in the best interest of the staff and students to merge HVE with Seahurst Elementary, as this will dismantle our current structure and hinder our growth.

It is disappointing we were not considered or asked to weigh in on the decision to collapse our school. Highline Virtual Elementary is made up of teachers, administrators, and office staff who have a shared goal of creating an innovative and engaging online school for our elementary students.

We're off to a strong start, a strong and successful start, because we have a leader, Jessica Ma, who is passionate about providing online students with an option that fits their individual needs, and teachers who nurture students' strengths. By dismantling this structure, I believe it will be the beginning of the end of our online school.

I'm concerned about the impact this will have on specialists across the district, as well as the quality of specialist lessons online students will be receiving. During the process of transferring to HVE, I inquired about the future of our school, as it was important to me that I join something that supported by the district and would be allowed an appropriate amount of time to grow. Yet here we are, five months in, and it feels as though the district is pulling the plug before we even have a projection of kindergarten enrollees. [SCOFFS]

The timing of this decision is especially concerning since the district continues to advertise to families that Highline Virtual Elementary is an option for next school year when, in fact, that is not the case. We were told in our meeting with district reps last week, going forward, our staff should consider ourselves Seahurst because HVE will cease to exist.

I'm asking you to please reconsider your decision to dismantle our current school. I'm hoping that you will consider giving HVE the time we need to grow. I'm also hoping that HVE staff and families are given the opportunity to share their thoughts and brainstorm with the district about the future of our school. Thank you.

Thank you. Next up, James Payne.

James Payne with two at North Hill Elementary. So the budget director recently told you Highline's student enrollment is declining and not ever expected to return to previous levels. Because student enrollments are tied directly to your revenue, this puts the district in fiscal peril. She said the disenrollments are due to rising housing costs in Highline. That's incorrect. Atlas is shrugging.

80% of children who've disenrolled since you approved the racist IRI policy are white. That's over 1,200 lost white kids since 2016. Those shockingly disproportionate numbers aside, whites are not the only ones who are sensitive to housing costs. And yet they are the ones who fled Highline en masse.

Your broken-promise policy-making caused this exodus. And now your anti-white racism will dearly cost the district because those people are never coming back, having apparently taken their children to school districts with less hateful policies and better academic outcomes.

Now, tonight on motion 10.2, you're being asked to approve the new payment to support career access and advancement into the construction and manufacturing trades for female and BIPOC youth. With your ye a vote tonight, the district pockets a whopping \$30,000 in state funds. But in turn, you must sell your integrity by approving this clearly racist and sexist legislation, which specifically denies white male children like mine these resources. Is it worth it?

Board, there is no such thing as good racism. Your equity policy states you seek to be, quote, "an organization focused on eliminating racism, racial and other identity inequities, and institutional bias," unquote.

So if you actually care about all forms of racism and bias and want to live up to those declarations, start by voting no on this motion. Otherwise it'll be yet another instance where Highline is not anti-racist but--

[DING]

--actually racist. Thank you.

Thank you. Next up, Andrea Ornelas.

Hi. Thank you guys for taking the time to hear me out. I'm Andrea Ornelas. She/her pronouns. Married mother of five. I'm a laborer with Laborers Local 242.

I'm happy to see Highline support a new pre-apprenticeship. I'm speaking in support with the establishment of community workforce agreements. And I want to thank Highline schools' administration for working with the building trades.

In high school, I had no idea what my plans were. But I was taught to go to college. That was the only avenue I was taught. It felt wrong. It felt like it wasn't something I wanted to do.

I became a pharmacy technician and then a stay-at-home mom. Fast forward three years, no pharmacy technician license. I'm going back into the workforce. And well, I worked minimum-wage jobs. And it wasn't getting my family anywhere.

I was fortunate to hear about a new pre-apprenticeship. After deciding to join the Laborers, I worked most of my career on all priority higher projects or community workforce projects. On these projects, I was given a chance, an opportunity to reach economic stability for my family.

And a CWA established here will do the same for women, people of color, and more because there is no right path but the path that is right for you. And those that will benefit for the CWAs in the community will have that opportunity. Thank you.

Thank you. Next up, Alex Myrick.

Good evening, school board members. I know that most of you, like many people in this room, pride yourselves on being progressive. I would like to take a moment and highlight one aspect of being progressive through a quotation.

Quote, "Progress means getting nearer to the place you want to be. And if you've taken a wrong turn, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about turn and walking back to the right road. And in that case, the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man." That's from C.S. Lewis.

Please consider where HSD may have taken a wrong turn. The district plants in the mind of impressionable children that they may have been born in the wrong body and steers them in a confusing direction, which may involve serious and irreparable damage, often while keeping this process secret from the people who are most invested in them, love them the most, and will be left to try and pick up the pieces, namely their parents.

I have come here to speak to you several times. Perhaps despite my graduate studies, clinical training, license, and other credentials, you mentally dismiss me as hopelessly behind the times and certainly ideologically far removed from HSD institutional opinions. That is your prerogative.

You have not hesitated to ignore my advice in the past. However, there are others not so easily dismissed. One is Dr. Paul McHugh, the former psychiatrist in chief for Johns Hopkins Hospital, who said that transgenderism is a mental disorder that merits treatment, that sex change is biologically impossible, and that people who promote sexual reassignment surgery are collaborating with and promoting a mental disorder.

[DINGING]

I implore you to be truly progressive and--

[AUDIO OUT]

Next up, Linda Peters. Linda Peters? OK. Franli Newman?

Hello. My name is Franli-- whoa, that is really close. Sorry. [CHUCKLES] My name is Franli Newman. And I am a third grade teacher at HVE. I came to talk to you guys today about the decision to collapse HVE and merge us with Seahurst Elementary under one principal. I would like you to reconsider that decision.

I taught fifth grade virtually last year and, along with Highline, saw firsthand the struggles and complications that came with virtual and in-person under one leadership. If we are collapsed, HVE's needs will become secondary to Seahurst's in-person's population. We need our current administration to continue because they know and understand the needs of our virtual school. We need to be kept together.

Since our small but mighty school opened, our staff has been dedicated to reaching students. And we've proven to be effective. Our students have made tremendous growth. And we are so proud.

Our staff is unique. Not only are we passionate about teaching with technology, we are constantly looking for and finding new and innovative methods for pushing our students to greater achievements. We don't care where we are. We care who we are.

And as a school board, you guys have an opportunity before you, an opportunity to make Highline Virtual Elementary and Highline an even stronger force than I already know it to be. By keeping our staff together with its current administration allows the great work to continue. Don't let this opportunity pass you by. Thank you for your time.

Thank you. Next up, Vaughn Rohrdanz.

Nice job getting the name right. That was good. Hi, my name is Vaughn Rohrdanz. I am a second grade teacher at Highline Virtual Elementary. I'm here to convey my shock and disappointment at the district's decision to collapse our school as well as why I believe it to be a short-sighted decision.

We received absolutely no forewarning to announce the change in plans until three district representatives showed up on February 8. To my knowledge, our families were not contacted or told that this could be a possibility after less than a year, nor were they involved in the decision as stakeholders.

The only stakeholders involved in this decision to my knowledge were those at the district office and business services. We were founded to serve a specific learning style and have teachers suited to fit this need. Not all our students thrive in a brick-and-mortar school. And not all families choose to be there. These students also deserve their space to flourish.

Our option provides the flexibility to meet the needs of our families and instruction from teachers who understand those needs. We had just begun to scratch the surface of what we could have become. And we were shut down before we had a chance to reflect, collaborate, and create something even better.

Our staff is a multicultural staff with insight into the many families our district serves and are a direct reflection of the students and families that choose to attend HVE. The model currently being proposed by the district is not, in my opinion, the best way to do virtual learning.

This decision does not convey the message of a district investing in virtual learning as a viable choice for its families. To me, it sends the opposite message, that it will be mothballed until eventually scrapped for good.

I request that you keep our current staff, administration, and office staff in a stand-alone setting as our own school. As my colleague said, we do not care where we are, but as long as we get to stay who we are. We are a small school. But we are indeed a mighty one.

I encourage you to show our community that we are an inclusive, innovative, and cutting-edge district that we claim to be and live up to our Highline promise by knowing all our students, both virtual and in person, by name, strength, and need. You have the power and the ability to help us build something that is a shining star in our Puget Sound area. And you can be a part of something truly amazing. Thank you.

Thank you. Next up, Katie Kresly.

Hey, it's a funny thing. Good evening. My name is Katie Kresly. [SIGHS] I'm concerned about the social-emotional learning in Highline's school district, specifically the surveys that they're asking all students questions about sexual behaviors and preferences as young as kindergarten.

Two weeks ago, I sent the directors, to all of you, an email with a resolution proposing that you name the parents as primary stakeholders to set Highline School District as a leader in parental rights and partnering with parents, as you say that you would like to do, for the purpose of the mental health and for the well-being of the students. Why? Well, apparently parents across the country are starting to sue the school districts for encroaching on parental rights.

For example, in Ohio, you have some parents who are suing the school district over teachers allegedly talking about sexuality with students in secret. This was filed January 16 this year against Hilliard School District at the US District Court for the Southern District of Ohio.

What they say is the defendant, the school district, is allowing activist teachers as opposed to trained, supervised counselors to specifically solicit from children as young as six years old, which is kindergarten, private, intimate conversations about sexual behaviors, sexual attitudes, mental, and psychological questions about student and students' family, and private religious practices, the lawsuit states.

I am concerned that activist teachers are starting to usurp the roles of skilled counselors and parents. They're infringing upon the upbringing of their children. I look forward to hearing about what you think about this resolution sometime very soon, because I do want Highline to lead and make sure that we are partnering with the parents. Thank you.

Thank you. Next up, Patricia Bailey.

Good evening. I'm Patricia Bailey, a retired Seattle teacher. Highline policy and procedure 3211 is contrary to fact and leads children into harmful behavior. I will quote a teenage girl who underwent hormone and surgical procedures based on the egregious lie that she could change her sexual orientation, as policy 3211 promotes.

Quote, "I'm a 17-year-old girl with a flat chest, a deep voice, a visible Adam's apple, and some facial hair. There's no reason for me to continue to live. I destroyed my life. And I don't think any person will ever want to date me.

There's nothing I can really do without getting reminded of my past and how much I miss it. I feel ashamed of what I did. I was just a kid. And I would have needed someone to help me accept myself. But my therapist didn't question my transness. I can't stop thinking about the life I could have had.

I love my mom. She stopped me the first time from transitioning. But the second time, she was also brainwashed and sadly thought that when all these professionals say it's the right thing to let your kid transition, then it must be the right thing. I want to kill myself. It's too much for me to handle. There's no joy in my life anymore, unquote."

There are hundreds of these reports of irreversible damage that began with the poisonous lie that people can change their sex to match, quote, "how they feel inside," unquote. It all starts with so-called compassionate adults affirming the child's self-loathing. Policy 3211 needs to be rewritten so our district will not be party to sad stories like this one. Thank you.

Thank you. And next up, Deborah Lip.

The BIPOC and the women, I'm all about giving these opportunities. I wish my grandkids had had those. So I'm all about those opportunities because I think they work really well for those that don't want college.

But the sad part is here you are segregating again. It's not OK. We've talked about all the mixed kids. My kids are the most not-racist kids in this world. So is this district.

The kids, they were never racist. And we watched the last few years. Everybody's trying to divide everybody. All of you on this board, you were voted in. We love you. You're all different races. We don't care. We want you to be really-- let God be equal. We are equal. You're not going to take that away.

And you're going to have consequences because you're going to have your men say, I'm a woman today. I'm going to go get that training that you're doing, the \$400,000 we're spending, all these union jobs. And a woman, you don't know what a woman is because nobody knows what that is anymore. So anybody is going to be able to go after this. Why are you segregating it?
[CHUCKLES]

It doesn't make sense. And your laws are going to come back, and they're going to turn around, and they're going to bite you. And no, you won't be voted in again.

And these children are who we care about-- name, strength, needs. They need an education. They need this kind of training. They need to get paid well. We're all about that. But it should be everybody has the same opportunity.

And we the parents obviously are making a difference because you cut us down in half time. So we're sticking around. We're not going anywhere. But we do vote. And I just want you guys to be equal with everybody. This is destroying the kids. I watch them every day. You're segregating, and it's not OK.

[DINGING]

Thank you. And that is the last of our speakers. And I see Mr. Sean Goodie arrived. So, Kisa, would you like to come back up and do the presentation again so Sean can hear all of the great stuff?

OK, good evening. Deja vu all over again. Thank you for being here. We have reinstated our recognition of community partners. This is something that we began a couple years ago and then, like everything, a little derailed by the pandemic. But here we are again.

So we wanted to take the opportunity to recognize our partner, Choose 180, before the executive director, Sean Goode, departs on to other opportunities. Choose 180, as I stated earlier, we began our partnership in 2018. And it was really in response to supporting our students who made some mistakes, may have gotten in trouble, have some discipline, in helping them learn what they need to do to make different decisions and get back on track with school.

This is based on their model that they use with our juvenile justice system for students who make mistakes and get into the juvenile justice system. And it's a diversion program.

And what I said earlier, and I'll abbreviate it, [CHUCKLES] is that although Mr. Goode is leaving Choose 180, he will still remain very connected to Highline. I just have to acknowledge all the support he's provided Highline over the years no matter what his role is, supporting our students, supporting our families, supporting our staff, particularly in difficult times. And with that, just say a couple words about Choose 180.

Sure. Thank you, Kisa. And thank you for the recognition on this evening. I first came to Highline in fifth grade at Olympic Elementary School. They wore those incredibly small shorts that unfortunately I think they're still wearing at Pacific Middle School, those green ones. And then graduated from Mount Rainier High School.

And it's always been a gift to be able to come back and serve the community that I grew up in, a community that's incredibly diverse, a community that's in constant transition. And it's an honor to do it with the school district that is persistent in honoring the growing diversity of our young people and the way they identify and the needs that they present.

Organizations like ours engage young people where they're at, support them to committing to a direction, and give them the resources they need to honor that commitment to that direction. And we believe schools are important partners in doing so, and schools in particular that choose to see the young people as they see themselves, reflect that image back to them in a dynamic way, and affirm them that they're possible, even in the midst of a world that would like them to believe that they're deeply problematic.

I applaud the direction that this district is going. And I'm grateful that although I won't be serving as executive director anymore, that our organization will still partner with you in honoring young people as possibilities to be developed and not problems to be solved.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here tonight. And I'm grateful for the way that all of you choose to serve our community. Thank you.

Thank you so much. Directors, do you have any questions for Sean or comments?

Hi, Sean. I used to work at Mount Rainier. And I just so appreciated the partners from Choose 180 and how present they were in students' lives, helping students advocate for what they needed inside and out of the class.

I really saw students gain a sense of agency because of the work with Choose 180. And so I commend you and wish you the best of luck. And I'm sure you're leaving Choose 180 in very capable hands. But thank you.

Thank you.

And something Kisa said, Sean, earlier that it didn't matter what role you were or where you were or what agency you were, you've always supported Highline because our students have meant so much to you.

And so again, I know we crossed paths during the Y. And just thank you again. Thank you for always being available. I mean, there was times when we just needed-- not just for our students but for staff. And you step it up.

So again, thank you. And I love watching your ride. I follow you to see you at the Super Bowl and everywhere you were. But I just say thank you again for all that you're doing. And I know wherever you go, I know Highline will still be part of you.

Gracias.

All right, Sean, we crossed paths when you worked at the Y, your story of how you grew up. And it touched me. You've been a strong supporter of Highline and their students and everything that we've done. And you've been at tables where you sit up for our students with some really powerful people. And you're like, no, this is the wrong way. And you stood up for them.

I'm very proud. I'm very proud to know you and that you're part of the Highline family. And you're not going anywhere. You're just taking a three-month hiatus for a little bit to relax and read.

So thank you for all that you've done. And we look forward to your continued support. So with that, we do have a certificate for you. I would love the directors to come on up and love to take a picture.

Absolutely. Thank you.

Thank you again. Moving on up now, it's going to be superintendent's update without Dr. Duran. I'm going to have Jeb Binns, vice president of the HEA, come on up please.

Good evening. Interesting new setup here. So good evening, President Van, directors. My name is Jeb Binns. And I have the honor of being the vice president of the Highline Education Association, as well as a Highline high school history teacher, a father of a ninth grade pirate and a graduated Ram, who's currently a buff. So there you go.

I'm here tonight representing the Highline Education Association on behalf of our president, Dr. Sandy Hunt. And I'd like to share a few thoughts.

From a labor partner standpoint, we understand that there have been positive conversations with King County. And the district is committed to moving forward with the community workforce agreement. And we applaud that and appreciate it.

It's urgent and it's really important that Tyee High School be included in that in a shortening and closing time window. And it's crucial that Highline works to build out a long term community workforce program. Thanks for making this tremendous step forward for the Highline community.

At our last representative council meeting, where we bring all the building reps together, we heard a few themes resonating across elementary, middle, and high school levels. And those themes were attendance and discipline accountability.

Attendance rates-- tardiness, absences, and truancies-- are, from a faculty standpoint, out of control. Across the system, we have a culture of highway surfing that's been established. And our members would like it to be addressed.

Faculty is being held accountable for no credit, or NC, rates of students who aren't attending class or who have figured out how to game the system. We have wide-ranging disparities in what is considered tardy or absent. Some schools mark a student absent or truant at 15 minutes. Others have a 30-minute threshold. And as I'm sure you can imagine, it's very difficult to educate an empty seat.

As the topic of discipline accountability, teachers system wide don't feel that students are being held accountable for their actions. We've seen some recent events which have been downright whew.

Building-wide policies are not being equally enforced. And truly restorative practices are not being implemented. Because of these inconsistencies, many folks have stated that they don't feel or their students don't feel safe in their school buildings.

Lastly, here's a policy wonk comment. We might want to review school board policy 2422, which is regarding homework. It was adopted in 1984. And it was revised in 2009. And it may be a bit out of date especially as we shift towards standards-based grading. Our policy should probably align with our practices as we go forward.

Lastly, a little plug. While I was on Capitol Hill last week meeting with Washington's congressional delegation, we spoke to the topic of community schools. Congresswoman Jayapal and Tyee High School's very own Congressman Adam Smith were quite interested in exploring bringing community schools to Washington and interested in some sort of a partnership as we go through.

As an NEA Director, I'm happy to bring some information and start working through. It'd be an interesting idea to continue to incorporate community into our schools as we do in concept. But maybe a more formal way to do it would be pretty exciting, especially with our new buildouts in Evergreen and Tyee, which are thrilling.

And quite frankly, the build-out in Highline with the new medical facility is quite tremendous and a great opportunity for us. I thank you very much. And I'm going to head off to my soccer game. Thank you.

Thanks, Jeb. Appreciate it. All right, now we're going to move on to school board reports. 5.1, the legislative reports, we have a lot of action going on up in Capitol Hill. I will be forwarding you some really high level bills that are being discussed.

Holly and team have created a really great Excel spreadsheet with colorful things. So I know our directors would love to see that to just show where we are sitting at with a lot of our school bills. So that is it with our legislative reports.

Next up is our director reports. I'm going to start with Director Hagos.

All right, so this week, our kids and schools and families and communities have thought of and carried out actions of love and kindness. And so I'd like to show a little bit of love and highlight some things that I've learned these past couple of weeks.

I'm going to start with some national recognition. We have congratulations to our communications manager, Mandi, I believe it's LeCompte, for being named to the National School Public Relations Association's 2022-2023 35 under 35 class.

This national honor recognizes emerging school communication leaders who are making an impact in their districts. And it's within the same year that we had another fabulous woman. It was our assistant director of college and career readiness, Sativah Jones.

If you guys remember, she also had the 40 under 40 through the *Puget Sound Business Journal*, I believe it is what it was. And so we've got some pretty awesome people, school leaders or district leaders doing some good things.

I'd like to also share out that the Mount Rainier High School team, the dance team I should say, they won first and second place trophies in dance competitions. So well done to all those students on the dance team.

And I'd like to take a quick moment to share a story of a parent from district five. I had just recently learned this. And it really touched me. And I want to make sure I honor this woman.

Grace Cabaya, she's a mother of eight children. And she's a top Amazon Flex driver. And so in December, Amazon had provided her a reward. And she had won \$10,000. But she also won an additional 10 grand for a charity of her choice.

And Grace chose Highline Schools Foundation. And she had noted specifically the incredible support she received at Parkside from a social worker, a new social worker to the building, April Reyes, who also lives within the community. And she also mentioned the school psychologist, Brittany Towner.

She also mentioned the Mount Rainier school counselor, Nicole Kemp. And Grace wanted to make sure she provided appreciation in a way that was going to be able to impact other students who may have needs similar to her own.

So this mother of eight chose Highline Schools Foundation. And that just means-- to me, it means a lot to see the outpour in support this woman has for our schools when she received the same care and support herself. So I wanted to honor her for that.

Thank you so much. Next up, Director Howell.

Yes, let's see. Last Monday, the 6th, I was able to join in a walk-through at McMicken Elementary. We were looking at indicators of standards-based grading and how that's going.

I really appreciate the team for letting me tag along and learn with you. It was really wonderful, as we all know. That is a stellar school. And Alex Haas really has some great things happening there.

I loved being in a kindergarten class, where they were spelling words with their fingers on the carpet. It was really, really strong indicators of learning happening. So just thought I'd share that that was really fun.

And in addition, Seahurst Beach Cleanup. Ninth grade Maritime High School students partnered with the Environmental Science Center to organize a beach cleanup at Seahurst Park. The students removed debris and trash from the park and researched how microplastics impact our local waterways. That concludes my report.

Thank you very much. Director Alvarez.

Thank you, Director Van. Kindergarten enrollment. I'm just thinking about way back, I think it's been now almost eight years when we finally came as a region together, noting that there would be a kindergarten enrollment date across our partner districts.

So kindergarten enrollment is now open for '23/'24 school year. We encourage all children who will be five years old by August 31 to enroll as soon as possible. And if you register early, you get access to free programs like Kindergarten Jumpstart.

That's a three-day program that introduces kindergartners to their school and classroom routines before the start of the school year. Jumpstart will be on August 23 through the 25. And if you visit highlineschools.org/kindergarten, you'll be able to get more information. So thank you.

Thank you very much, Director Alvarez. And my turn. I had a great opportunity last Friday to join a student from Raisbeck Aviation around his work-based learning. He is volunteering at a virtual reality company out of Seattle. And the things that he is learning how to do in regards to 3D and virtual reality and just what he's learning, the hands-on, was impressive, better than what he can do at the school.

He was able to connect with students across the world with what he was doing. So I was really excited to see that and look forward to more work-based learning with our team.

One of the other great things that's happening in all of our schools is HealthPoint. HealthPoint is available to all middle and high school students in Highline public schools. We have HealthPoint clinics at Tye, Evergreen, and one that just opened up at Highline High School.

So our students have access to immunizations, sports physicals, routine medical care, reproductive health services, behavioral health care. And they can receive all of this without leaving the campus. So having that access there and a great partnership, thank you. That was awesome.

I also want to do a quick shout out to our team. We had a work session earlier today in regards to our family and community partnership. So Kisa, Lita, Nicki, thank you for the presentation, and staff that was here.

When we did the gallery walk, I wish we had more time. So we look forward to reconnecting with your team and learning a lot more on what they're doing and how they're doing it. So thank you very much.

OK, that is it for our director's reports. Moving on up to our consent agenda. Can I please have a motion to approve our consent agenda?

I make a motion we approve our consent agenda.

Can I have a second, please?

I second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Any opposed? There are none. Thank you very much. And we're going to move on to action items 8.1. This is to approve resolution 11-23 to renew non-renewal notices pursuant to a reduction in work force to achieve a balanced budget. Any questions or comments? Hearing and seeing none, can I please have a motion, please?

I move that the Highline School Board approves resolution 11-22, authorizing the superintendent to direct action to implement the reduced educational program for certificated staff for school year 2023-'24 and notify certificated non-supervisory staff adversely affected by the reduction prior to May 15, 2023.

I'll second that.

Roll call, please.

Director Hagos?

Yea.

Director Howell?

Yea.

Director Alvarez?

Yea.

Director Van?

Yea.

This motion passes four to none.

Thank you. Just for clarification, Director Howell said 11-22. It's 11-23.

[CHUCKLES] This is why I taught ELA, not math. Thank you.

[LAUGHTER]

Thank you. 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, and 8.6 were moved to the consent agenda. Now we're going to move to 9.1, intro action items. This is to approve the new contract and purchase order with Northwest Playgrounds for the '22/'23 school year. Can I-- Scott? Good evening, sir. How are you doing?

I'm doing well. Thank you for taking time to ask questions on these. I think it's really important both so that the board has a clear understanding of paths that we're going down along with an opportunity to share with the community, as well.

So this board action request is for playground upgrades across the district and actually play toys, those kind of things. So let me give just a little history.

When the ESSER fund was established, there was a group in Highline called the Care Team that was put together, the Care Committee. This was a community group from outside of-- not being managed from inside the district that took the opportunity to review needs from the parent and community perspective on what could be-- where the needs are in schools and on school grounds to help support a great school environment.

Out of the total ESSER fund, there was just under \$4 million, 3.97, allocated to the Care Team to be able to look across the district and see where we needed to make some changes and differences. One of the larger areas that was addressed with this team was playground equipment.

We do have some pretty old playground equipment across the district, along with a minimal amount of ADA compliant or ADA type of playground equipment so that everybody has the same opportunity to get out and enjoy the outdoors with their friends. So there was a list put together by this Care Team, where we both-- they did a phase I and a phase II.

The phase I is play structure replacement, which is big toy, the apparatuses that you'll find either on playgrounds or on the fields. This phase I of the project, remember, the total phase I was \$667,000, just over that number, to replace toys across the district at multiple elementary schools along with some supported equipment at middle schools.

Phase II of the project is the fall zone upgrades for the different playgrounds across the district. Some still have the old piles of chips under the toys. That's not the best way to go as far as creating a safe fall zone because it gets pushed out, moved away as feet go across. And all of a sudden where you're going to fall is where there's nothing but dirt. But there's lots of chips outside from that.

Along with chips get tangled up in clothes and everything and end up spreading clear out through the whole school. [CHUCKLES] Yeah, or thrown. So we're upgrading those fall zones. And we are upgrading some of the fall zones that are the foam zones, as well, that are just old and worn out.

So that's phase II, is upgrade to the fall zones. This work will be done simultaneously. But we have to do the toys first before we can do fall zones where we're installing new toys.

You'll see this is listed as Intro and Action. Our goal is never to bring intro and action on the same night. The timeline to put together, first of all, the survey work by the Care Team to determine where we needed to do the work, then go out and get the prices and contractor bids for the installation of these projects took us out further down the calendar than we wanted to be.

We wanted to do an Intro Action tonight so we can get this PO established and get the equipment on its way and the contractors started so that at the start of next school year, this is up, ready to go, and done.

Thank you, Scott. Directors, any questions?

You mentioned that one of the goals was more ADA-compliant equipment. Is that something that we will have at every site, I'm assuming?

Yeah, we are actually putting that into our minimum construction standards. So as we build new buildings, they will all have ADA-compliant equipment. We're upgrading current playgrounds with the different levels of ADA compliance. And we'll probably have a committee to help support some of the ancillary additions.

There's some new multi-language reader boards. There's picture boards, things like that that are easy to add to a playground but don't require a fall zone and all the different things that go with it.

So we'll add that along with-- we're going to have, I believe it was Gregory Heights was the first school we did this at. And this was funded by the PTA, where we actually have a swing that a wheelchair can get on the swing and swing with the rest of the kids.

Any other questions? I do have one, Scott. So just for clarification, this is going to be for the four elementary schools. And it will be completed before the '23/'24 school year, correct?

That's complete-- there are more than four schools listed, though, that are going to be included in this project. And you'll see there's Bow Lake, Cedarhurst, Gregory Heights, Hazel Valley, McMicken, Midway, Mount View, Shorewood, and Southern Heights.

OK. All right, thank you very much.

Absolutely.

I appreciate that. As said, directors, any other comments? I need a motion, please. Intro action.

Sorry, sir. I make a motion that we approve the contract with Northwest Playgrounds NPO for \$826,389.84 for district playground equipment replacement upgrades and maintenance, as recommended by the 2021-'22 Care Committee. I'll need a second.

I second.

Roll call, please.

Director Hagos?

Yea.

Director Howell?

Yea.

Director Alvarez?

Yea.

Director Van?

Yea.

This motion passes four to none.

Thank you very much. We're going to move on to intro items 10.1, motion to approve resolution number 16-23, renewal of Highline Big Picture State Board of Education waiver from credit-based graduation. Any questions or comments?

Yeah, so it was a very complete package when we received this bar. So I read through quite a bit of the material. And I got to watch the recruitment video that showed a lot of the students speaking on their perspective of how successful this school is for them.

And so it was really good to watch and see. What I wanted to know is I wonder why there is a need for recruitment for this program, for Big Picture.

This program, it sounds like it was developed and meant for students who are disengaged and at risk for dropout. But the presentations are being held in the elementary schools. So I'm curious to understand what the recruitment need is for and what that looks like.

Good evening, President Van, board members. I'm Jeff Petty, the founding principal of Highline Big Picture. I think that was my cue to come up onto questions. It's a complex question. And I'm speaking about our school and also Big Picture as a network. There's a fairly intense equity core value that drives our work.

We approach school really differently. And so I think what has occurred both with the network and our school is that we are often a great resource for students who have disengaged or started to lose interest or lose hope in school.

That said, it's not a program specifically designed for those students. And so sometimes I think that can create some of that confusion. When we started in 2005, we came into the district when the district was grappling with its cohort-based graduation rates.

And I think we wanted to be in this role. And we were also perceived as, oh, here's an option that can help address that. So our early cohorts were almost exclusively students with multiple risk factors, recruited through talking with counselors, visiting with people in middle schools.

At some point in our history, because we draw from the whole district, we were incorporated into the lottery that serves Aviation and Choice. Our perception, I don't know-- we haven't done a lot of formal data analysis around this. But our perception is that contributed to a shift in the family perception, oh, this is a choice. I should get in there if this is a good opportunity.

And our enrollment seemed to transition demographically over some time. And we, starting two years ago, started trying to address that by minimizing our recruitment efforts at schools where we were receiving a disproportionate number of applicants coming out of sixth grade and trying to specifically visit schools where we weren't seeing applicants.

And so that's what that shift in recruitment effort refers to. It's a very blunt instrument to try to access students and families most in need of a different option. And now we're starting to have some meetings with the lottery team about other ways to get at that.

Thank you. I did have another question. But I have to think on that question. So thanks.

Thanks, Jeff, for coming and speaking to us tonight. So this intro is in regards to the waiver from the credit-based grading. And can you share with us-- and I know that we have approved it the last three times and passed it.

To what is our success rates in regards to our students, since it isn't an A, B, pass kind of deal? How are we judging our success rates on our students that are passing, or that are crossing that stage?

I feel like we assess that based on post-high-school trajectory. What are they-- I mean, pursuing? I get the Big Picture learning mission sometimes confused with the Highline [CHUCKLES] phrase around futures that they choose. I think the Highline one is, the future they choose. The Big Picture vision is lives of their own design. I think there's a lot of overlap there.

So for us, a successful outcome is if a kid, after graduation, is successfully engaged in the career that they're excited about or continuing with post-secondary education.

And how long do you stay in contact with those students? Because I would love to create a model where we do stay in contact with our students to see if they need help, success rates, and all of that stuff? So--

I would say indefinitely. We have-- four of them are employees of the school. Another one of the second graduating cohort now has a sixth grade son at the school. And another one is applying for her kid, who will be in seventh grade.

Part of the intent of having small cohorts, have one teacher follow them all for years is that those bonds become lasting. When they graduate high school, students, particularly if they don't have a really robust support network of their own, the support network that they've become accustomed to in high school just drops.

And so part of the idea of the school design is through those relationships, they'll feel comfortable coming back and reaching out. And so through just social media and staying in touch with people, I think we're pretty in touch with a very high percentage of the graduates. Like, if you were to name a graduate from a year, it would take me a relatively short number of texts and phone calls, I think-- if I didn't know already-- to find out, what are they doing?

OK. Thank you very much. Any other questions?

I was just going to comment. Sorry, Director Howell, did you want to say something? OK, I was just going to comment to just your question. I was really impressed with some just basic data that was available in terms of kids coming to school. You've got a really high rate of kids going to school, at least from what I saw.

In terms of attendance?

Uh-huh, yep. And then also, it was nice to see some great assessment data in terms of, I believe it was the science standard. A high number of kids passing state standards, or state assessments.

So just looking through that, to me it shows that kids are coming to school at a higher rate. They are engaged in their learning. And there are some really good outcomes. So that was all very exciting to see.

I guess just quickly going back to that question that I had on mind was more in terms of, when you are recruiting and talking to families, are families clear about the difference in how you address graduation and state standards in their learning, or the personalized learning paths that you create for kids?

I think yes and no. It's really hard, in our experience, to describe it well enough for people to really get the felt difference of the school. We don't have classes. We don't have grades. It's so different from what kids and families are used to.

I think we try to describe it thoroughly. And then we also still have students and families, after they've been there, surprised at how different it is, hopefully pleasantly, sometimes pleasantly and part, help me understand this. And then sometimes people decide this is not what I thought it was.

I'll just add that I'm not a huge fan of seat time. So I love when schools have creative approaches to demonstrating mastery. I was fortunate enough to have a Big Picture student intern with me and went to her culminating project. What are they called?

Exhibition.

Exhibition. If you've never been to one, you definitely should go. They're phenomenal and such a wonderful way to wrap around a student. And I have stayed in touch with that student. And she's off changing the world.

So I really appreciate what Big Picture is doing. And just like I say to Tremain at Maritime, I'm hoping that we can spread this whole mastery-base, move away from seat time to our comprehensive schools. Students love being in school. And we don't have to dangle credit over their head to get them to come. So thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you, Jeff. Appreciate it.

Thank you.

All right, 10.2, motion to approve the new apprenticeship-- pre-apprenticeship program payment. Any questions or comments? I do have one. Thanks for showing up at such short notice. One of the questions in regards to-- actually two questions in regards to this is the pass-through dollars, what we're looking at.

Love to see what the success rate is. And how many students are being served by these dollars? And can we correlate that to also any FTEs that is currently being funded by the money?

Yeah, so we have a report from OSPI. I'll talk about the numbers first. By the way, good evening, board. I apologize. So we had 48 kids enrolled. 36 of them were students of color. And nine of them were white. And three did not report race or ethnicity.

Sadly, there was no women involved in this cohort. This is last summer that participated. That's concerning, considering this was open to Highline, Federal Way, Tukwila, Tahoma, and many other districts in their South King County region. It wasn't just Highline. And so the recruiting needs to happen a little bit more.

Again, this is all driven by the local labor unions saying, this is what they need. This is what they're asking for. And so the FTE really came through through the new program that was contracted through the state with the support of Senator Orwall.

And so as we pick this up in support of this, we're looking at building a diverse workforce. At the Skill Center, where I'm from, we have a pretty diverse workforce. What's interesting is you talk to a lot of the students, and predominately are white students, they have family already in the union.

And so if you ask them, what's your goal, where are you going, I'm going to go work at the union with my dad. It isn't that same story for our young ladies that are in there and also for students of color.

A lot of them don't have those connections. And so that's why something like this is really, really important to connect the pieces because, again, we want to provide opportunity for all of our students, not just the ones that are connected, if you will. So that's the way I look at it from the Skill Center perspective.

But this program is beneficial. It needs to be expanded. I think for what we're paying, it needs to be bigger. And we need to have a bigger scope of supporting all students and all opportunities. So it's promising but not quite where it needs to be.

Thank you so much for that. Directors, any comments or questions on that? I appreciate it. Thank you so much. 10.3. This is a motion to approve the amendment of existing contract with New Direction Solutions ProCare therapy to increase contract amount from 110,000 to 430,000. Any questions or comments? Hearing and seeing none.

And 10.4 and 10.5 are very similar. It's a motion to approve resolution 12-23. Tye High School Replacement Project will not create racial imbalance. 10.5 is resolution 13.23. Evergreen High School Replacement Project will not create a racial imbalance. Any questions or comments?

I do have a question in regards to this. So just the title in itself, I'm going to question it. What does it mean when it says, "will not create a racial imbalance"? And this is the Replacement Project. So I would love to hear what you have to say there, Scott.

All right, I appreciate that. This shouldn't take longer than about 45 minutes. So here we go. First of all, it's a prerequisite in order to remain qualified for school construction assistance funding from the state, or this gap funding. So it's part of the deform process, is what OSBI calls it, to provide this compliance both defined.

We do the legwork to determine that we're meeting compliance, put it in front of the board as a resolution to get it approved. And that allows us to stay eligible for SCAF funding.

So there's a clear definition. Well, before we get into the definition, the way that new construction can impact racial balance of a school building is if with that building comes either a change in programming for the school.

If you switch it from a traditional or comprehensive high school to a CTE program, that could influence-- or a CTE-driven high school, that could influence the attendance within the current boundary. And that's the other way that you can influence, is if the boundary is changing as a result of the construction.

When school districts are overcrowded, they will build a larger school and then expand the boundary to relieve pressure on the schools that are around that but within that same district. We're not changing any boundaries with this program, nor are we changing the school program that's within.

So with that being said, there's four different ways that you need to comply with WAC 392, 342, 025. And those are measured, again, based on if you're making changes. We're not making changes. So we're not making changes to program or boundaries. So we're not going to influence, because of construction, the racial balance within that building.

All right, that was less than 45 minutes. Thank you so much. Directors, any other questions or comments?

OK.

Just a quick one. So I noticed that-- so there will be a resolution created alongside those? Because I was reading at the bottom. So each one will have a resolution basically just stating what you just stated.

Correct, it should be in your board packet already for this.

Yeah.

All right. Thank you very much, Scott.

Thank you.

Well, that concludes all of our intro items and our meeting. Can I have a motion to adjourn?

I make a motion. We adjourn.

A second, please.

I second that.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Any oppose? Hearing none. Thank you.