

Highline Public Schools | School Board Meeting - September 20, 2023

Well, good evening, everybody. Welcome to our regular school board meeting. It was on Wednesday, September 20. Please stand up for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Roll call, please.

Director Garcia.

Here.

Director Alvarez.

Here.

Director Hagos.

Here.

Director Van.

Here. And I have an excused absence for Director Howell and Dr. Duran. Any changes or additions to tonight's board meeting agenda? I hear none.

OK. We're going to move up to our recognitions, introductions of our new administrators. Can I please have Dr. Reinig come on up?

Good evening, President Van, Vice-President Alvarez, and members of the board. I am thrilled, on behalf of Dr. Duran, to do round two of our new administrator introductions. These are familiar faces to Highline, but each have assumed new roles and responsibilities in the last couple of months.

So first, I want to introduce Elizabeth Maine as our new principal of Seahurst Elementary. Elizabeth, would you stand up so we can-- so Elizabeth joined Seahurst as principal just this year in 2023. Prior to being at Seahurst, Ms. Maine has served as assistant principal at Midway Elementary for several years. And prior to Midway, she served as the Dean of Students and literacy specialist at White Center Heights Elementary.

Elizabeth earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Washington, a master's in literacy education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and a second master's of education in educational leadership from U-Dub Bothell. So welcome, Ms. Maine. We are thrilled to have you at Seahurst.

I also would like to introduce Lauren McAllister, our director of budget. Lauren was recently selected as the new director of budget. And in this role, Lauren will lead the budget team, including financial reporting, budget development, enrollment, and short and long-term financial forecasts.

Lauren joined the Highline Business Services Department in 2016 and has over a decade of business operations experience. She has a bachelor's and master's degree from Seattle University and a certificate in education finance from Georgetown University. Congratulations, Lauren. We're happy to have you in this role.

I'm looking around. This is an awkward perspective. I don't see Mr. Terry here, but I do want to recognize Lyon Terry as our new principal at Midway Elementary.

And I'll share a little bit about him. And if he walks in behind me, you can wave at me, and we'll introduce him. So Lyon Terry was selected as the new principal at Midway Elementary School, effective this year. Since 2019, Mr. Terry has been the assistant principal at Mount View Elementary School, another dual-language school here in Highline.

Prior to Mount View, he served in various roles at Lawton Elementary School and Seattle Public Schools, including principal intern, and teacher. Mr. Terry earned his administrative certificate in 2019. He also holds a master's in educational leadership from Seattle Pacific University, a master's in education from Portland State University, and a Bachelor of Arts from Reed College.

In 2015, Mr. Terry was named as the Washington State Teacher of the Year, and also that year, the Puget Sound Regional Teacher of the Year. He's also taught in New York public schools and began his teaching career right here in Highline, at Shorewood Elementary.

And there he is. Welcome, Lyon. We are thrilled to have you here tonight. And also as the new principal at Midway Elementary. Thank you.

Thank you so much, Dr. Reinig Directors, any comments to our new staff, or not new staff, but new positions?

I can say just a warm welcome. It's exciting to always hear about all the exciting work that they've done before and how they came to Highline. I love that historical content that always gets brought in. And I can say, for Principal Maine, I live half a block from Seahurst, so you will probably see me quite a bit there.

Either I come on my days off and just hang out for a little bit or just see and meet some of the parents out there. So hopefully I'll be seeing you. And just welcome to the rest, so excited that you've joined Highline. Or for those that were already here, I'm so excited, now, you're in your new role. So welcome.

Thank you.

Thank you for your continued support.

All right. Thank you so much. And we're going to move on to our scheduled communications. On behalf of the Board, we would like to thank you for coming and speaking this evening.

Our norms and rules are posted on the screens. Please be mindful that you are here to speak to the Board, and there may be students here, or watching, that are paying attention to your words. In addition, the Board will not be able to respond directly to you about your testimony during the meeting. Thanks, again, for coming and speaking. First up is Joseph Lipp.

Good evening, Board members. I want to apologize, Mr. Terry. I laughed when you weren't here. I thought, maybe, you were at the school talking to my grandson about his concerns.

But anyway, I wanted to talk to you about 9.3, which is the special education, upping the \$250,000 contract or almost half a million through Sunbelt Staffing contract. I looked up special education, and it says, "specially designed institution that addresses the unique needs of student eligibility to receive special educational services."

Looking at where our students are, at 25% of the national average, special education would include everybody from kindergarten to eighth grade. We have 56 languages in our schools, two year learning deficit because of COVID. We're teaching equity, equality, diversity, instead of the antiquated learning systems that got everyone in this room where we are today.

It's amazing. If you had a counselor, psychiatrist, a tutor for every two kids, we would still be losing ground. I talked about my grandson that's going to be at Mr. Terry's school. You shouldn't be frustrated at eight years old or concerned of the lack of security because of the way the kids--

For those of you who are parents, please ask yourselves a question. Who would you trust to provide guidance to your child on important and even life-changing issues, not in the event of your death but while you are still alive and capable? Suppose a person you have never met were to provide this guidance, what qualities would you expect them to have?

This district has many intelligent, diligent, well-meaning staff. But what qualifies them to usurp the role of the parent? Perhaps you wonder, where is this happening?

It's happening on a regular basis with comprehensive sexual education, sexual orientation gender identity and expression, or SOGIE. This curriculum suggests to young children that their biological sex may be an error, and that it can be changed. If these impressionable children act on such a suggestion, staff are instructed to deceitfully conceal these actions from the parents, unless the child authorizes the disclosure.

I see in front of me, on the desks, intelligent, diligent, well-meaning leaders. If you've been paying attention, you know what's coming next. What qualifies you to usurp the role of the parents? No matter how intelligent, diligent, and well-meaning you are, it takes a great deal of hubris to think you can successfully intervene and come between not just one parent and child but thousands of them.

That is what you are doing by keeping these curricula and policies in place. After leading the way in transgender treatment, Norway, Finland, Sweden, France, and the United Kingdom have all started to realize the consequences of initiating hormonal and irreversible surgical intervention in children. With their serious side effects and lack of documented success in changing course, it's past time for Highline to do the same.

Thank you. Meg Van Wyk.

Good evening, Board. I'd like to take this opportunity to make a public service announcement regarding the school board. The League of Women Voters of Seattle King County along with the King County Library service is pleased to announce a candidate forum for the Highline School District Director candidates.

The league is a nonpartisan organization committed to defend democracy and empower voters. We are pleased that all contested seat candidates have responded positively to our requests to hold this forum, and all will be participating. This is a free public forum and will be held at the Burien Public Library on Tuesday, October 10, from 6:30 to 7:45 PM, in the meeting room, on the second floor.

The King County Library system will record the event and will also provide Spanish interpretation. For your information, we have two other forums planned for the Burien City Council candidates on Tuesday, October 3 at the Burien Library, with Spanish interpretation. And that's from 6:00 to 7:45, and then one for the Des Moines City Council candidates at the Wesley Terraces on Monday, October 16 from 7:00 to 9:00.

More information can be found on either the King County Library website or the League of Women Voters of Seattle King County website. Thank you so much and hope to see everybody there.

Thanks, Meg. Carlos Ruiz.

Good evening, President Van, Vice-President Alvarez, and the other members of the Board. My name is Carlos Ruiz. I'm here just to introduce myself. I am running for Board Chair District Four.

I am a parent of two lovely daughters in the district at Marvista Elementary co-workers, and I'm also the vice president of the PTSA there. I invite all of you, everyone in Highline Public Schools, administrators, teachers, parents, families, and all neighbors, everyone that's interested, to please find out more about me, my website, electcarlosruiz.com. I'd love to grab coffee with anyone and everyone that wants to learn more about my views and policies and why I'm interested in running for the Board.

I am also a product of public education. And so this is all very near and dear to me. I've been involved in the community for a very, very long time, so really excited for this campaign season. Thank you. Thank you for the work you're doing.

Thank you. Christopher Bendix.

Good evening, board members. My name is Chris Bendix. I'm a project developer with Mercy Housing Northwest, an affordable housing developer here in Seattle and throughout Western Washington. And I'm excited to present to you today a project that we're working on in the Midway neighborhood in Kent, adjacent to the future Kent Des Moines light rail station.

In partnership with Open Doors for Multicultural Families, another nonprofit service provider focusing on meeting the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, we're proposing to build a 200 unit mixed-use apartment building, with 100% affordable units. On the ground floor, Open Doors for Multicultural Families will be focusing on developing and operating an early learning center, a community center, and relocating their offices to the ground floor.

This is one of several properties that we have in the Highline School District that we're excited to be bringing online. And we see this as a broader effort of preventing displacement in the Midway neighborhood. We know that there is going to be a lot of changes around the light rail, and we're excited to see that this project will keep students who are enrolled in local schools in their neighborhoods and in their local schools.

We're going to be getting started on this project in the next six to eight months, with more outreach, and we're hoping to start construction in the middle of 2025. Construction will take about two years. And we expect the building will be done in 2027.

We're looking forward to providing on-site resident services through our own program called Mercy Scholars that focuses on out-of-school time and educational success for students and their families. I'll leave it there and say that we're looking forward to working with Highline School District administrators and staff on this exciting new project. Thank you.

Thank you. Patricia Bailey.

Good evening, Highline School Board. One of the leading lights of our day, Jordan Peterson, an intellectual and best-selling author, is an outspoken critic of the schools, the media, and other institutions. They have created an artificially induced epidemic of gender confusion.

One of the tragic results of chemical and surgical alterations of children in the grip of the transsexual belief system is their sterilization. In a recent interview, Peterson stated, quote, "the sterilization of minors is forced sterilization. You cannot obtain valid informed consent from minors for such surgery. That's forced sterilization by the UN definition. That's a crime against humanity." Unquote.

He went on to say, quote, "five European countries have already backtracked on the gender affirming surgery front, and the US is going to follow quickly because of all the lawsuits. In five years, there won't be a single person who will admit they have ever been in favor of this absolute butchery." Unquote.

If school clinics are participating in the chemical castration of students using pharmaceuticals, even if they couldn't care less about the negative effects on the students themselves, school boards may want to call a halt to this practice until the legal ramifications are known. In addition, warning students of the many ill effects named in current lawsuits would be the humane thing to do-- disruption of the endocrine system, heart damage, pain throughout the body, permanent dysregulation of the reproductive organs, bone density loss, mental anguish, and so on. It's more than unfortunate when schools are the purveyors of deceptions that jeopardize children's health. Thank you.

Thank you. And Stacy Manning.

Good evening. Yesterday, my fifth grade son contacted me, just as the school day began. He explained that his substitute was, quote, "a man dressed as a woman with fake boobs and everything", unquote. He left the classroom and located the principal and explained that his parents wouldn't want him to stay in class today. He was correct.

Thus, Tuesday was filled with errands instead of class time. My son, because he is growing up in a culture that victimizes children, is well versed in the difference between gender dysphoria and autogynephilia. A distinction that many, if not most adults, do not comprehend.

According to the NIH, autogynephilia is defined as a male's propensity to be sexually aroused by the thought of himself as a female. As defined by the Oxford Dictionary, gender dysphoria is a state of severe distress or unhappiness caused by a feeling that one's gender identity does not match one's actual sex.

So how can my son determine whether he's in the presence of a man who is suffering real distressing body dysmorphia, or that he's part of a captive audience of 9 to 10-year-olds wantonly without his or his parents consent being subjected to a man who is sexually aroused as he mocks femininity by wearing prosthetic breasts in order to better fill out his dress in the classroom? The answer is he cannot, because no one can.

My son, a 10-year-old, made the call to err on the side of caution and not subject himself to a potential fetishistic, opportunistic pervert. It is your job to keep our children safe, and my son did not feel safe at school yesterday. Parents have the right to opt out of a so-called trans substitute, and it's appalling to me that my son, at 10, apparently has more courage and wisdom than the adults employed by Highline, adults that are supposed to have his best interests foremost in mind. Thank you.

Thank you. Thanks for everybody for coming and speaking this evening. Next up is our superintendents update. Dr. Durant's not here, but I'm going to welcome up Dr. Grubb and Dr. Larson.

Good evening, President Van and members of the Board. On behalf of Chad Baker, who is one of our Teamsters leaders, I am sharing the following comments. "Dear Highline School Board, on September 9, the Union held a vote for classified staff on the contract extension, which was ratified overwhelmingly by the membership.

I would like to thank the district for its willingness to come forward with additional funds while in the last year of a contract. I would also like to extend additional thank yous to Steve Grubb, Kristina Larson, Sarah Baker, and Sean Morrow, and everyone else, involved in putting this extension forward to our Teamsters members. This extension provides substantial increases for all members and especially those members who need it most at the lower end of the pay scale.

We look forward to continuing our good working relationship with the district as we move forward through the upcoming school years under this extension. Thank you all." Chad Baker, Teamsters Local 763 Secretary Treasurer.

I know that Chad, Mr. Baker, wanted to be here tonight, but was not able to be, so he prepared those comments as part of the superintendents report from labor partners. And Chad is a leader, of course, of Teamsters 763. I just want to say, from HR standpoint, how appreciative we were to be able to work with Teamsters off cycle in order to come to the agreement.

The workforce planning report, that you may recall, we had among its top five recommendations addressing paraeducator pay that are pay in the \$21 an hour range was not retaining or recruiting successfully for paraeducators. In fact, the Sunbelt contract that is on the agenda tonight is an attempt to use agencies hires to help with attracting and retaining paraeducators.

We think that tonight's motion 8.1 in which we bring before you an agreement to have paraeducator pay at \$25 an hour to start will be a significant way to attract and retain paraeducators. And again, I just want to thank the Teamsters for taking a tough bargain in that. We disproportionately put money at the lower end of the pay scale to raise that \$25 floor.

You may be wondering, where does that situate us relative to other districts. That puts us above Bellevue for paraeducators, above Puyallup, above Federal Way, and above Auburn. So we're very pleased with where we are. And it's also a two year agreement that envisions increases next year so that, we don't lose ground. So again, big thank you to Teamsters and excited about the proposed agreement under 8.1.

Thank you very much. Concludes our superintendents updates or school board reports. Nothing on the legislative end, I'm going to move to the director's reports. Director Garcia, start off, please.

All right. I'm excited to just let everyone know that we had the Super Bowl winning KJ Wright at Evergreen, The Evergreen High School last week. Just honoring our students, letting them know how proud they are of our seniors, and just making sure that our students were able to kick off the school year with support. So just having those kind of adults, those role models in our community, to come through and hype our kids up, makes me super proud.

Thank you very much. Director Hagos.

I have nothing to report.

Thank you. Director Alvarez.

And just a big shout out, Brat Trot is coming up. It helps raise funds for the Highline Schools Foundation, and so it's happening on Saturday, October 7. There will be a new 5K route this year that will start at the Town Square Park, in downtown Burien, followed by the annual Oktoberfest celebration.

So if you have a team and you sign up, you get a discount code. Also, make sure to note your Highline School affiliation at registration. The school with the most affiliated runners will win \$500 for their school or for their PTA. So sign up for Brat Trot, just a big shout out, excited that we're beginning.

I think Fall's near. It feels like Fall already this morning. So here it is Brat Trot. That's all.

Thank you very much. And I just want to do a quick shout out, just welcoming all of our students and staff back into our schools, had a really great first day with Dr. Reinig and Dr. Duran at some of our schools going in there, seeing our students, surprising my kid in his class, didn't like seeing dad, but, yeah, tough. But just welcoming everybody back. Thank you.

OK. We're going to move on to our intro and action items. 8.1, this is motion to approve the Tentative Agreement for Teamsters Local 763. Dr. Grubb did you want to speak any more to this? Or any questions or comments from directors?

No. Just normally, when we have an intro and action item, we normally get just a quick update as to why its intro and action and not just intro.

This one is part of our negotiated agreements. And candidly, we're ready to go. We are loaded.

The computers are loaded to get this pay in this cycle so that our paraeducators experience this increase on their September paycheck. You have the authority to say no. If you do, well pack that off. But you say yes, we're pressing the button tomorrow from a payroll standpoint.

We also have a communications plan ready to go. We'll work with Catherine Carbone Rodgers on that. Press release is ready to go, and then we have a recruiting plan that will be executing. So we really intend for this to be a big HR action and have an impact on our district, on our employees, most importantly, on some of our most vulnerable students.

Perfect.

Thank you very much. So I'm going to step back guys. I was a little excited to get to 8.1. I forgot our consent agenda.

Thank you.

So I'm going to step back a little bit. OK? Can I please have a motion to approve our consent agenda?

I would move to approve our consent agenda.

Second, please?

I'll second that.

All in favor?

Aye.

Any nays? Everybody? Thank you. OK.

Thank you for the 8.1 introduction. Any questions or comments other than that?

I'll just add that I am so, so Highline proud that we are able to live up to this promise of centering those furthest from pay equity from fairness and the decision that we made to do this the way that we did. So I'm just so proud of voting yes for this tonight.

Thank you.

And I just want to add the same, and the fact that eagerness of-- that's what I wanted to hear around intro and action. Why wait two more weeks? Let's get it done.

If this is something that we're all in agreement around making sure that those furthest from the margin, that includes our staff, that get their pay increase. So I echo the same, how incredibly proud I am to be part of a district that we're moving towards making sure that all, including our staff, are getting what they need. And so with nothing else, if anybody has nothing else to say, I move that the Highline School Board adopt the negotiated agreement with Teamsters Local 763.

I second.

Roll call, please.

Director Hagos?

Yea.

Director Garcia?

Yea.

Director Alvarez?

Yea.

Director Van?

Yea.

This motion passes four to none. Thank you. Thank you much. We'll move to intro items. Motion to approve the renewal of the OSPI, Beginning Educator Support Team Grant, any questions or comments? Hear and see none.

9.2, this is motion to approve the LAP Community Partnership. Any questions or comments? I do have a couple questions on this.

Kisa's coming on up here Thank you, Kisa. The impact on this is about \$250,000. And as of right now, there are seven committee, or not seven committees, but there are seven organizations that we are going to be funding. Can you just share with us, if there was a committee, who was part of the committee and how were these organizations chosen?

So, yes, these are state supplemental funds, learning assistance program, Readiness to Learn. These funds are earmarked for community partners that enhance students academics, behavior, attendance, et cetera.

So as you may recall, we had previously used pandemic recovery funds for partnerships. And we had lots of money, and it was easy to make some decisions. And then, with the reduction in recovery funds and going back to the amount of partnership funds, historically, we took the opportunity to revamp our program in a way that made sense both for partners and schools.

So what we did was, we reached out to our community partners to curate a catalog of community partners that included descriptions of their organization, their services they provided, their capacity, et cetera. And they also identified schools that they might be interested in working with. And then, we shared that catalog with our principals, shared that out in multiple modes.

We had our family and community engagement specialists also working with school leadership so that they could submit a light application, if you will, about which partners they would be interested in. We asked them to think about alignment to their school's annual action plans would help support those goals.

And so once that was done, then we had partners submit an application, and then we moved forward with a match process. That match process, there was an initial matching done with our community partnerships manager Nikki Fogarty, Alito O'Donnell, our director of Family and Community Partnerships. And then from there, when you had, maybe, more schools that were interested in partners, or partners interested in more schools, and it just wasn't a match, we had a committee that included staff from teaching and learning, including the ILEDs, who had insight into our schools annual action plans, and then we began making some decisions.

And what we wanted to do was to think about a fair distribution of partners. So if a school had, say, already had strong partnerships, and there was a school with maybe one or none or two partners, we thought about the total number of partners. We thought about the partnership type.

So is this a college and career partner? Is this an arts partner? Is this a student support partner? We thought about that. In the distribution, we want to account for redundancies and gaps in partnerships. So we made those decisions.

And this is just a portion. It's just lapsed. So we do have some basic Ed funds that are funding a couple of other partners.

We also-- this is probably more than you asked for, but I'm going to give it all. We also categorize our partners. And this is something we've done with the support of WIDEC-- and I apologize, I can't remember what the name of their acronym. But it's a nonprofit that supports school and nonprofit partnerships, effective school partnerships.

So we categorize the partners into three types. There is cooperative, coordinated, and then integrated. So integrated being a partner that has staff that's in the building, like all day, they're deeply integrated into the school. It's pretty seamless.

They're integral to the school community. It's almost like they're school staff. But they're still a community partner.

All the way down through-- this is so bad. They're not here, I'm sorry. But I think it's cooperative, which is the least integrated. So they might just be running an after school program.

So we asked our partners to articulate which category do you fit into. And then we made some decisions with that as well. So we wanted to do a spread of-- we didn't want to put all our money into integrated because that would leave-- those, typically, are more expensive-- and would leave less funds available for things like, engageable designs, that are after school programs.

All right. Thank you. With that, any other questions or comments?

Thank you, Kisa. 9.3 is motion to approve to amend contract between the Special Education Department and Sunbelt Staffing, LLC in the 23/24 school year. Any questions or comments? OK.

I will follow back up with this one. I know that at the beginning of the-- about a month and a half ago, that the board did approve a huge sum for Special Ed. So I'll just follow back up in regards to this, the reason behind more than 100%, from \$245,000 to \$570,000 that increase. So we'll just follow back up with staff on that. So you don't need to speak to it. Thanks, Steve.

Any questions? I apologize. OK. None.

9.4, this is a motion to approve Resolution 27-23 for the Cooperative Governmental Purchasing Agreement with King County. Questions or comments? Hear and see none. 9.5, motion to approve Resolution Number 28-23, Interlocal Agreement with the City of Burien regarding the parking lot improvements adjacent to Moshier Memorial Park . Questions or comments? Thank you.

And then 9.6, this is motion to approve Pacific Middle School's Replacement Project Award of General Contractor/General Manager, GC/CM, Contract for Pre-Construction Services. Questions or comments? Hear and see none.

And then last but not least, 9.7, this is motion to approve the Highline High School Photovoltaic System Addition Project Closeout, Purchase Order CP220030. Any questions or comments? Hear and see none. OK.

That concludes all of our intro items.

Director Van, just to add, if there are any questions or any wonderings, to please go ahead, as soon as you can, and contact either Dr. Duran-- just so we make sure that be knowledgeable about our voting as we move forward and answering any questions way, way ahead of time.

Thank you, Director Alvarez. Any items added to the consent agenda? OK. I hear and see none.

With that said, that concludes our meeting. Please have an adjournment.

I move we adjourn for tonight's meeting.

Second, please?

I second that motion.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye. Any opposed?

No one's going to oppose it?

No.

OK.

Thank you, everybody.

All right. Bye, bye.