

## Highline Public Schools | School Board Meeting - October 4, 2023

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Well, good evening, everybody. Apologize for starting a little bit late. Welcome to our regularly scheduled school board meeting, Wednesday, October 4, 2023. If we could all please stand 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 to my left is our superintendent, Dr. Ivan Duran. Director Garcia is going to be running a little bit late. So he will be showing up here briefly. Are there any changes or additions to tonight's board meeting agenda?

I do have some change requests. I wanted to move a couple of items into the consent agenda if there are no questions. And I'm looking at action items 8.4, 8.5, and 8.6.

Thank you. So that's moving 8.4, 8.5, and 8.6 to the consent agenda. Do I have a second?

I'll second that.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Any opposed? None. Thank you. All right, we're going to move on to our recognitions this evening. We have quite a few.

So we're going to start off with our Disability History Month, Director Howell.

Wonderful, thank you. All right. I'm very excited to be presenting this. It sounds like we have. Is Gay here to receive the recognition? Wonderful.

All right, whereas Washington State Legislature has designated October as Disability History Month, and whereas people with disabilities in our district, state, nation, and the world have made significant contributions to our society, and whereas recognizing disability history will increase respect and promote acceptance and inclusion of people with disabilities, and whereas recognizing disability history will inspire students with disabilities to feel a greater sense of pride, reduce harassment and bullying, and help keep students with disabilities in school, and whereas studying disability history in the context of larger civil rights movements will provide important civic learning, and whereas Highline Public School reaffirms that learning about disability history and people with disabilities is an essential part of a complete and basic education for all students, now, therefore, the board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby recognize October, 2023 as Disability History Month in Highline. And call upon all Highline citizens to celebrate and promote quality educational programs that include instruction, awareness, and understanding of disability history and people with disabilities. Thank you.

Do I--

Yes, please, thank you.

Thank you. Dr. Duran and members of the school board, thank you for taking the time to honor Disability History Month. Disability history has many aspects to it. People with disabilities continue to fight for their rights and advocate for their place in society in education and in employment.

In Highline 15.5% of our students have disabilities. And we've done a lot of great work to build inclusive opportunities and environments for them. We still have work to do. Because before in 1974, 1975, none of our students would have been allowed access to public education. So it wasn't until 1975 that those students were able to come to public school and be educated alongside typical peers.

And in the voice of some of our students, who-- a leadership class at Highline High School participated in a PE Peers program. And one of the students, his voice said, without inclusion there is ignorance. Everyone should have the same opportunities. And we believe these students have the right to be educated alongside of us.

And I think that's pretty powerful coming from a student and not just from an old adult, like me. So I appreciate your time very much and the work that we all do, and the work that we need to continue to do to remove barriers for students with disabilities. So thank you very much.

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Can we have a picture, please?

Thank you. Next up is our Family Involvement in Education Month. Director Alvarez.

Before I read the proclamation I also wanted to take the time to acknowledge, I think there's sometimes a belief that engaging community and engaging families is so easy. You just put out a flyer and it happens.

I've been in this work for over 30 years and can tell you that it takes special people, not only to build the connections, but to sustain them. And so I want to acknowledge that it's not easy. But I am so thankful for the persistence that our family engagement team with Lita, and Kisa, and the rest of all of you, who are just amazing. So--

[SPEAKING SPANISH]

Whereas parents and family members are their child's first and most influential teacher, and whereas family involvement in a child's learning is critical to success in school and life, and whereas the role of families in supporting the success of Highline students from preschool through college cannot be overstated, and whereas family engagement in a child's schooling is a legitimate element of the education system, and whereas when schools, parents, and communities work together as partners, our children benefit. And whereas Highline's educational leaders and staff are developing programs and resources to support stronger partnerships between families, schools, and communities, and whereas the vision of Highline Public Schools is to graduate all students prepared for the future they choose, now, therefore, the board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby recognize October, 2023 as Family Involvement in Education Month in Highline. And we urge all citizens to join in this observance. So Lita, please.

Thank you so much, Superintendent Duran and school board. I am so excited to have so many families here who represent different organizations, different levels of involvement in their child's life. I'm also really excited because in Highline our families co-created our family engagement vision. And when you share that proclamation, I think about how family engagement in Highline means trusting relationships, open communication, and opportunities for families and schools to partner.

And I could not do this work alone. And so I would like the team, the student support and family engagement team to stand up. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Whoo!

And more importantly, I want to make sure that we acknowledge our families who are here. So when I call the organization that you represent or the school that you represent, please stand up. So I would like to ask our families who are part of the family action committee to stand up.

And in this committee we have representation from the majority of our schools. And we're working hard for the schools that we don't find a family to be a part of that. I also want to ask our-- please, remain standing-- our families who are here from Natural Leaders, our families who are here from Supporting Partnerships in Education and Beyond, and our families who are here from the PTA, and our families who are here from the special education PTA. Thank you so much.

[APPLAUSE]

And I'd like to invite all--

--a hard time getting everybody in.

This microphone is--

OK, I think I have you all. Got it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you so much. The next step is our Anti-Bullying Month. Director Hagos.

All right, OK, so whereas bullying, intimidation, and harassment in schools are persistent detractors to a healthy educational environment for children to learn constructively, and whereas bullying consists of a variety of actions and behaviors intentionally designed to infringe upon the harmed party's physical and mental well-being, targeting characteristics of the harassed party, whether real or imaginary, and whereas the actions have deleterious effects on the well-being of students to a point where they lose the desire to engage in and connect with their school classes and classmates, and adults, and whereas bullying continues in schools, and with those students connected to the school in the Highline Public Schools, and whereas the face of bullying has changed to include cyberbullying, where the act of such bullying, intimidation, and harassment has changed to be conducted over such media, including, but not limited to the internet, chat rooms, electronic mail, blogs, social networking sites, cellular phones, cellular phone calls, and transmissions and more, and whereas it is recognized that the acts of bullying, intimidation, and harassment can result in damage of property, physical harm, mental distress, and the death of a child, and now, therefore, the board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby recognize October 2023 as Bullying Prevention Month in Highline, and urge all students to join in this observation.

[APPLAUSE]

All of them? OK, so it looks like there's a few representatives. Oh, and you're already in front of us. Thank you.

Corinne Jones, principal at Chinook Middle School, along with Jill-- is it "Had-eesh"-- dean of students. Sara Calderon, re-engagement specialist, Deanne Conrad, Alison Henry, and Diana-- "Dee-anna." Is it "Pa-check-o?" Pacheco? Good.

School counselors, presenter is myself. All right.

Good evening, President Van and board of directors and Superintendent Duran. This year we invited an amazing school to receive this proclamation. They are really an outstanding team that work with students and families. And that builds a relationship, and certainly reduces the number of bullying incidents. So we have Principal Karen Jones and her team tonight to receive the proclamation.

[APPLAUSE]

All right, Dr. Duran, and our school board, I am so excited to receive this recognition, and grateful to be recognized for the many things we're doing. I want to let you know that at Chinook it has been work ongoing. Bullying is real. It happens to our students. And our kids in middle school are often still learning how to take care of each other, to say the right things, to pay attention to the impact of words, actions on others.

But what I really want to let you know is that I think that we're being recognized, because at our school we leave nothing to chance. I've said that before. And it's really important to us. We have a dedicated counseling team that invests time to make sure they know our kids, and know them really well, and listen to them.

We have a dean of student and re-engagement specialists, and then a whole team of support staff, and really teachers and educators that take it seriously. And we let our kids know every day we care about them. And we expect the very best from them. And so we will not put up with any hate language, any racist comments to each other. And if it happens, we're going to take it seriously and do something about it.

So I'd like to welcome up my Chinook team who are here, our counseling team, our dean of students, our assistant principal, just to accept this together from you. OK.

[APPLAUSE]

Karen, do you mind coming back up? You should take this with you.

Would love to.

And to round up our recognition, it's our Principal's Appreciation Month. Dr. Duran?

Yes, I get the honor of doing that tonight. Thank you, Director Van. Whereas principals and assistant principals are expected to be educational visionaries, instructional leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, and guardians of various legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives, as well as being entrusted with young people, the most valuable resource, and whereas principals set the academic tone for their schools and work collaboratively with teachers and teacher leaders to develop and maintain high curriculum standards, develop mission statements, and set performance goals and objectives, and whereas the vision, dedication, determination of a principal provides a mobilizing force behind any school improvement effort, and whereas the celebration of National Principals Month honors elementary, middle, and high school principals, and recognizes the importance of school leadership, ensuring that every child has access to a high quality education, now, therefore, the board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby recognize October 2023 as Principals Month in Highline. And call upon all Highline citizens to honor and recognize the contributions of school principals and assistant principals to the success of students in Highline. And I'd like to invite Representative Karen Jones, who is here as well both the Principal of Chinook, and also the vice president of Highline School Principals Association to accept it.

I also saw that Crystal Goodwin was here. So Crystal, if you want to come forward, please come forward. And any of our other administrators are here, come on up. It's a great time.

Maggie, Serena, Taylor.

Maggie, yep. I saw Crystal earlier. Must have to leave.

OK, Dr. Duran and school board members, I am just, again, honored to represent our administrators. I think that there is nothing better than being a school leader. It is a job that I feel should be so respected. It is a school leader who can make an impact in a school building like no other person. And I really believe, not that about myself, but I believe that about my colleagues. The hard work, the dedication, the passion is never ending.

And I just really want to make sure that our principals know that they are highly respected and honored individuals. And I'm so proud to be part of a team of administrators that work here in Highline. Thank you.

All right, thank you. Pictures?

[APPLAUSE]

So we get to come up again?

All right, we're going to move on with the school presentation.

Yep, I'd like to invite Sarah Tolbot up to introduce our school presentation. Sarah is one of our instructional leadership executive directors. Welcome, Sarah.

Thank you, Dr. Duran, and members of the school board. It is my great honor to introduce to you one of our amazing principals here in Highland Public Schools, Maggie Heater, who's here to tell us about Mar Vista Elementary School.

Welcome.

Thank you. Hello, school board members, and Dr. Duran. I stand before you as the proudest principal. I know there are many other principals here, but the proudest principal of Mar Vista Elementary.

We are a school of 540 students. We have 26 classrooms, K through 5, and we have a hard working staff that is dedicated moment by moment to fulfill our promise, which is to know our kids by name, strength, and need, and to prepare them for the future that they choose. My hope today is that you see that shine through in the presentation as we go through, highlighting the work that we're currently doing, and that we plan to do.

Because as we know-- here's my little disclaimer. It's only October 4. So we got a long way to go this school year.

[LAUGHS]

Really quickly, just a quick photo of our kiddos in their fun run. Aren't they cute in all their colors there?

So when we think about delivering on our promise I want to go back a few years to a time that we all have a shared experience, and that's the pandemic. When we returned to Mar Vista, we started to realize quickly-- we anticipated this. But we began to realize that our students had varying strengths and needs.

At that moment in time we made commitments that we were no longer going to talk from a deficit standpoint, that we were going to talk about strengths and needs. And that we also were going to talk about reimagining how we serve our kids. What we had been doing for years wasn't going to be enough to make up for that time.

So that is what we started to do in that first-- that first clunky year when we were all back. We started to talk about how we were going to bring back universal design for learning. We started to talk about how we could dedicate 30 minutes each day for our students to be involved in intervention and enrichment outside of their content time in reading and math. And we also started to talk about how we could carve out 30 minutes of cell instruction every single day for our students.

Now, this was a big ask. It seems very simple, but it is a big ask to find that time in the day, and to prioritize that time of the day. All of these priorities were in service of an ultimate goal, which is quite timely tonight with the proclamation for special education. And that is to have full inclusion of all students that attend Mar Vista Elementary in our general education classrooms. So we currently have a self-contained EBC classroom. We also have over 100 students with individualized education plans in various areas of special education services. And it's a priority of ours at this time that those students receive education for core content at grade level standards during the school day in their grade level classrooms.

We know the goals, right? Culture, belonging, innovative learning, bilingual and biliterate, and future ready. Once again, we will highlight each of these as we go through today.

The priorities I'm going to outline is our first priority in our annual action plan, which is focused on increasing student reading comprehension. When you look at our data, you will see that our students make progress, but we're a bit stuck in the area of informational text comprehension. So that is a focus for this year.

The other focus is increasing our sense of belonging. By the end of last year, only 71% of our students felt like they belonged at Mar Vista. Not OK. Goal is that they all feel like that, and that they all feel like that by the end of this school year, actually tomorrow, right? That's a big focus.

When we think about innovative learning, and that first priority, it really goes back to that story that I was telling you about around inclusive practices. So what does that look like now? So fast forward from the beginning of the story a few years ago to now.

What you see in our classrooms are kids, all kids engaged in their grade level content during the day. During the success time, they are then-- that's when they receive their pull out models. They also receive intervention or enrichment if they're not in special education. So if I know I need to work on short ballet and long ballet to eventually access my grade level content, that's what I'm going to do during this time. And that's what my teachers are working on to support me.

My teachers are teaching me using GLAD strategies. So we're starting to dust off all the stuff we learned a few years ago. So kids are accessing content and increasing comprehension through use of GLAD strategies, through use of close reading and shared reading strategies. For the teachers in the room, these are things that we've known about for a long time. We're just reimagining and shifting how we teach.

And lastly, you will see evidence in all classrooms around universal design for learning. So if you're not familiar with Universal, or UDL, Design for Learning, that means that it's teaching kids how to access their learning through choice and demonstration of evidence of learning, through providing content in a variety of ways to meet the needs of all of our individual students.

When we talk about culture for belonging, and going back to that kind of dismal score of only 71% of our students reporting that they belong at Mar Vista, we spent some time reflecting on the programs that we currently have in place. And we revised our tier one supports, which is really our PBIS support. So if you're familiar with those programs, we know in the schools with the tickets, and the reinforcement for being respectful, and kind, and responsible, we did a rebranding of all of this. We started calling them orca splashes. We were handing them out and finding kids making excellent choices for everything all over the school.

We developed principal lunches. Every Friday their names are drawn, and they get to have lunch with me or Ms. Angeles Luna. We hand out special pencils if you're a winner. And we talk about using these pencils with pride, and holding on to them. And they say I'm an orca splash recipient.

Each of these things are building out to develop this sense of belonging. But it wasn't enough. That was all that we did last year. And it still wasn't enough. So what else are we planning to do this year?

So what you'll see right now is this development of building out of recess clubs. Recess isn't for every kid. And if we're going to meet the individual needs of every kid we also have to think about that, the playing on the field and the monkey bars might not be for everyone. So we have reading-- we're working on reading clubs. We're working on ping pong clubs. We're working on art projects. We're just trying to reimagine what we provide for kids so they feel like this is a place where they're seen and they belong.

We're doing cross grade level buddy classroom work. So you might see a kindergarten classroom buddied up with a fourth grade classroom, doing an art project, doing reading work, going on a field trip. You will do cross grade level recess once a day, not every grade, but some grades, where we're teaching leadership skills to the older students to play, and facilitate play with younger students.

We're also working on this as in development and will come up in the next few months around a fifth grade leadership club. Because when you really take that 71% of culture of belonging, and you dig even deeper, it's a lot of our fifth graders. They start to grow and change. And they start to think, maybe this isn't the school for me? So we're thinking about, how do we develop programs where they feel like they are still part of something, but maybe not the same types of things that we're offering for our five and six year olds.

When we talk about culture for belonging, and going backwards a little bit to the idea of inclusion, and the idea that we want all kids at our school accessing gen ed content, in gen ed classrooms, this was a big lift that we spent the last few years working toward that culminated the first week of school this school year. This is the thing that I am most proud of at this moment at Mar Vista. And that is that every student that is identified in the self-contained classroom is hardly spending any time in the self-contained classroom.

We've had various people come by the school. And we walk by, and it's an empty room. It's so empty that we're adding a kindergarten, and I actually thought for a minute maybe that's where we put the kindergarteners. Because it's always empty.

And that means that our kids are in gen ed. And that means they feel like they belong. And I want to take a minute to show a video of Micah. And it's really brief. But I'm going to set it up.

Micah has been in our school since first grade. And he's telling a little bit about what it feels like to be in Mr. Braise's room. Mr Braise is his fifth grade gen ed teacher. So if we can press. Do you want me to press? Yep, thank you.

So what has it been like starting in Mr. Braise's classroom this year?

It's been really different, because I've been up there more than I have been last year. And I'm making more friends, and doing a lot more things. And it's been a great time.

[LAUGHS]

So that's just a snippet. And keep in mind, we filmed this just the first week of school. But really, out of a child's mouth, it's been a great time. But I also pulled a few quotes from other kids we interviewed, kids saying things like being in Mr. Braise's class has been the best experience of my entire school life.

There are a lot of people that are really nice. There are a lot of people that really get everyone else. This is straight from our students talking about how they feel like they belong because we are-- as Gay had mentioned, breaking down barriers, and providing access to students within the school setting.

Oops. OK, sorry. So when we talk about bilingual and biliterate programs at Mar Vista we are really proud to share that we are growing in this area. As of today, we have 99 students who have qualified for English language support at Mar Vista. If you're familiar with Mar Vista community and demographics, that is a big jump. And we're so excited.

So we are constantly shifting and changing on how we're meeting the needs of students. All of our students are engaged in IRI lessons. All of our students are included in general education classroom. We're applying for, but-- newsflash-- we just received today, so I'm so excited-- funding to host an after school Spanish world language class.

We have classroom teachers who are providing supports that integrate home language and build positive cultural identities in the classroom on a day to day basis. And that's some of the artwork right out of the halls there, and as I walked through Mar Vista last week.



When we talk about future ready I like to highlight the community partnerships that we have at Mar Vista. Now, it's no secret if you've been part of Normandy Park or Mar Vista community that we have a really active PTSA that provides a lot of enrichment for our school. But some things that you might not know about is we have a Girls on the Run and a Let Me Run program that we're really proud of. We have a partnership with Boeing for a STEM after school program. And then also we have this budding relationship with John Knox Community Church.

So I'm going to take just a minute to tell you last year they came to me and they said, Maggie, we have this empty building that's really used a few hours a week. You have kids that live all around this empty building. What can we do with this space? And when I say all around, I'm talking walking distance if you know the neighborhood at all.

So we started to dream. We started to think big. We started to think so big we had to scale back. And we started with an after school art club. So they helped us think about how we could provide this.

So we provide transportation. Our bus is routed to John Knox on Friday afternoons. The kids get off. They do an art club program. And then they walk home.

And so this is a program that's provided for students who live within a certain radius around the community church, where they can access enrichment activities that they might not otherwise be able to access. The ultimate goal is to build out. I'll tell you about that one in a minute. But I want to show you just one quick video on what this looks like every Friday afternoon.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

John Knox Presbyterian Church and Mar Vista Elementary School collaborated to create a free after school art club at John Knox. About 30 students participated in the program over the course of 12 weeks. And a large majority of the participants live within a block or two of the church.

Our teacher, Sylva Helgager, brought many years of art teaching experience with her. And students responded right away to her warmth and expertise.

So something we're really, really proud of. I'll tell you more about that in a minute, about our future plans. Oh, my gosh. We're going to see it again. Sorry about that, guys. Not again.

[LAUGHS]

Sorry. OK. So in the end, when we think about our successes, I've said it many times in this way, but we're really proud that we have all of our kids included in the general ed setting. This year also because we've been involved in the inclusion pilot, we welcomed four students from Valley View Preschool who otherwise would have gone to self-contained classrooms in other schools in our district through the integrated K program.

And also we have push in and pull out happening throughout our day. And if you were to walk our halls, you'll see small groups happening all over the place, and small groups within classrooms, and kids getting services at their levels and needs in reading and math.

Also, the tier one supports I mentioned, remember, those little orca splashes? Well, I ran some quick data for this. Last year we handed out-- which we already knew this part, because we celebrated. We handed out 50,000 tickets.

And so that means that on average each student was acknowledged for awesomeness 94 times, that we had 32 orca splash lunches. That's on Fridays. And so 1,500 students attended those lunches, where they got to sit alongside me, and the assistant principal, and other special guests, and be honored for their amazing work. So just a few things that we're proud of at this time.

Lastly, as we think about our next steps, we want to expand that partnership with John Knox. So we've been talking about additional days. And we've been talking about language classes and sports classes. And when we were dreaming big we were thinking about including other organizations, like YMCA, Parks and Rec, Girl Scouts. I mean, the list could go on and on in who we could involve in this programming.

Also, we have a lot of work to do, as I mentioned. It's only October 4. So when we think about our annual action plan, we are just scraping the surface of all that we're doing. But our goals this year include learning more, or reminding ourselves of those GLAD strategies, continuing work on IRI, including topics around identity. This is a topic that our staff has designated, expanding intervention strategies.

So thinking about right now when I mentioned those intervention times that our students have during success time, our teachers have really limited tool boxes. And so it's our goal to expand that toolbox so they have even more to teach. And then also too, as I mentioned, kids have access to intervention and enrichment. And we want the enrichment time to include project based learning. So that's one last goal for us.

Thank you so much for allowing us to share a little bit about Mar Vista tonight. I would invite any of you-- I know a few of you have recently stopped by. And I would invite any of you to stop by at any time. Our kids are really excited to share what they know. They're really excited to meet all of you. And I'm just super, super proud. So come on by. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you so much. Now, directors, if you guys have any questions that you would like to ask them. Director Garcia.

It sounds like you're doing amazing work at Mar Vista.

Well, thank you.

Could you share a little bit more about what are ways that you are-- what was the-- acknowledgment of awesomeness about staff. So how are staff being recognized for their amazingness? What are strategies that you're seeing are working, and really hyping up your team?

Oh, well, first of all, they are some of the hardest working people I know. So they are acknowledged on a regular basis through typical means. So we acknowledge them through our staff newsletter. We acknowledge them on the intercom with kids in the morning. We have morning announcements.

We acknowledge them-- our PTSA and I partner together to do monthly acknowledgments of our staff. We highlight their teaching every week in a newsletter that goes out. I take pictures and brag about their work to each other. We have time to share in our staff meetings around what we are doing in our practice. And then we also grow leaders.

So we are a large school. But we don't have a robust support staff. And so what we work really hard on is building leadership within so that we have people presenting on their craft, being experts on their craft, and using each other to learn more.

And kind of the follow up question to that really is, if we, the board, gave you the magic wand to really support your team, to get to that next step, your vision, what would it be?

Oh, my goodness. Wow, the wand? Really?

The wand.

Cause that would be big. Well, I think the first thing is that they are seen and heard. So they work very, very hard. And it's no secret that their work is very, very hard. And I think just knowing that is a lot to them.

But secondly, as I mentioned, that we are a larger school, but we don't have currently a lot of additional staffing. And I think that they would love to have another staff member to help with instructional strategies and support. Currently we only have funding for one staff person to do that work. And to just to build out the leadership work in that area would be really great. But in the end, to be seen and heard, the ultimate thing.

Awesome. Good work.

Thanks.

Thank you. Director Hagos? No questions? Director Howell?

Hello, Principal Heater. I'm wearing my Mar Vista Orcas t-shirt. I'm a proud Mar Vista mom. So I had a couple orcas in my home this evening. And I asked them-- I told them that you were presenting, and Miss Angeles Luna was going to be here. And I said, so what is the best thing about Mar Vista?

And I was expecting recess or lunch sometimes, right? Because that's typically what I hear. And both my daughter and the neighbor said the teachers.

Aw.

And they said they teach us what we need to know, and they give us more chances when we make bad choices. And I just want to say, as a mom, I really appreciate that my child who's there and my child who's gone into another school were both pushed and supported as whole children. They were never seen as just numbers or test scores, but they were really supported and loved in all ways. So I just want to thank you.

And I was going to ask a similar question about magic wands. But I think you answered it. So I'm just really excited. And I want to come visit. And I'm really excited to see inclusion.

I've heard so many good things from teachers and from students about that. So I can't wait to see it in action. So thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. And I have to say that our teachers really are the best. And that they do know their children.

And I am sure every teacher-- if there are a lot of teachers here, it's the same. I mean, how hard we work to know kids by names, strength, and need, it's just continuous in what we're doing. And I say to parents all the time that we think. We dream. We overthink about your children all the time, because we want the best for them.

Thank you. We appreciate it.

Thank you. Director Alvarez.

No questions, just a comment. Thank you. I mean, it's awesome to hear especially about the inclusion, but just to hear Director Howell getting emotional about her kids, being that supportive. And that means a lot. So thank you for all that you're doing.

Thank you.

All right, Principal Heater, I had the chance to walk this school on the busiest day of the year, the first day of school. And it was fun. It was great.

One of the presentations you had was around partnerships. And I know Mar Vista has a great PTSA. Can you share a little bit about how our kids started the school year with back to school supplies and how that was all organized?

Oh, yes.

Because I thought that was really amazing and would love to see how we can emulate that across--

Excellent. Thank you for reminding me of that. There were so many things to share that that didn't make the list. So I appreciate that you brought that up.

So we partnered last school year-- Carlos Ruiz and I, and the PTSA started talking about school supplies. And we know that school supplies-- for any parent in the room, school supplies, purchasing of them not only is an expense, but it's just a beast of a project. It's never that you walk down the one aisle and you get everything in that aisle? Right? It usually involves more than one store, or many clicks on Amazon, or whatever it might be. And then on top of that, the cost.

And so Carlos and I started dreaming up, what if we could purchase all of the supplies for the kids in the school? And he and the PTSA worked to dedicate money in the budget. And then he went to work all summer, ordering from everywhere in the world. You should have seen Mar Vista cafeteria. It was overflowing.

It was every teacher's dream, by the way, with crayons, and pencil boxes, and pencils. And I had texts over the summer from Carlos, like do we really need the Ticonderoga pencils? And I said yes.

[LAUGHTER]

Thank you, teachers, right? Yes. Yes, you do. There's no if, ands, or buts about that. That's what we need.

And so he worked hard to get everything ordered, even drove to like eight different stores to pick up things. And then we were able to deliver boxes of school supplies to each classroom.

Now, it's wonderful because it's an equity solution, an equitable solution, right, to something that's happening in all of our schools, around the purchasing of them. But it went one layer deeper that we didn't even really think about until the first day of school. And that was when the teachers started talking about how every kid has the same pencil box. Every kid has the same pencils. Every kid has the same crayons.

It all of a sudden isn't this my thing is better than your thing, and how we can have inequitable things happen in classrooms that can land in other areas in the school. So it was life changing for our families, for our kids, and for our teachers. So thank you for highlighting that.

And I know that our PTSA is incredibly interested in figuring out a way to make that happen across our district. And so we just met last week to generate ideas, to begin to build out what that could look like. So thank you.

Thank you very much. Dr. Duran, anything else? All right, thank you so much for the presentation, and for being here tonight.

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

All right, and we're moving 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're here to speak to the board, and that there may be students here or watching, and 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. And thanks for coming in and speaking. First up is Alex Myrick.

Good evening, school board directors. I have been a mental-health professional for over 30 years. And I have supervised dozens of fellow professionals. In that time I have seen tragedy due to faulty judgment or lack of awareness.

To help spare you similar regret I would like to share with you a few differences between gender dysphoria and autogynephilia. Gender dysphoria is a disorder in which there is a marked incongruity between one's natal sex and their expressed gender. A distinction should be made between early onset gender dysphoria and rapid-onset gender dysphoria, which has multiplied exponentially in recent years, and often has its onset after binging on transgender websites and/or being exposed to transgender presentations at school.

Autogynephilia is a condition in which a male is sexually aroused by thinking of himself as a woman. The American Psychiatric Association classifies it as a paraphilic disorder, in the same broad category as exhibitionism, pedophilia, and sexual sadism. Autogynephilia falls within a subcategory known as erotic target identity inversions.

Men with this desire-- with this disorder have a desire to impersonate the thing to which they are sexually attracted, or transform their bodies into a facsimile of such persons or things. In some cases autogynephilia is a transitional phase between transvestic fetishism and gender dysphoria.

As with any mental disorder, it is hazardous to generalize, because among the population of those afflicted there are different degrees and different subtypes. Teachers are both authority figures and role models. In our current ideological climate your commitment to being inclusive and open minded is understandable. But it must be--

[BEEP]

Hi, I'm Jeffrey Steen. I used to teach at Evergreen. The band program was eliminated last week, the band and jazz program. I'm also a parent of a student that-- of my daughter that goes to Shorewood. We moved from the Seattle Public Schools and moved my daughter to Shorewood to be here.

And I just wanted to say that we had such great support in the community. We started our own booster club. The parents were fantastic. We were planning on going on a trip to California this year, to San Francisco.

In the years past we've had these wonderful jazz nights where we raised tons of money and get the kids to California. We had the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that supported us in the years past as well. I'm just so unhappy with the district for this decision, so sad for our students-- [SOBS] --and that they won't have the program there anymore.

Our students won't have access to the band program. A lot of them were amazing musicians that could get scholarships. And now that is also something that they can't have access to.

They did a presentation, or kind of a demonstration last week. I was really surprised that the principal called the police on the students. And of course, those were students of color that were out there.

It seems like the district has a pattern of getting rid of older teachers, especially at Evergreen, with this letter of agreement that allows for only first- and second-year teachers to not be displaced. That's what happened to me. As a 27-year veteran, I should never have been displaced from-- I spent my life building that program. I spent the entire summer cleaning everything out. Thank you so much.

[BEEP]

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. Next up Darane Treto.

Sorry. (SOBBING) I'm disappointed that the Evergreen Band is not there. It affects me. It affects our family. Music has been something that's been big for my children. It's something that we always went to. We would go out to their concerts. My family would go.

I have a hard time with this, because it is hard for students to go through the district, and any school district. It's hard for them to get through elementary school. They play since fifth grade. They go into middle school. Middle school is a tough. It is tough. And many of them rely on music to help them get through.

They go into high school, totally different. They also have to get through and navigate a different system. And music and band is a great way for them to be able to collaborate, come to something that they know, is a language that's different than what non-music people go through.

For our family, with the loss of my father, it was an easier way for my daughter to navigate through life because it was something that was strong for her that she could come back to, like other children, like other students. They're able to use this music to get through.

We always talk about collaboration and teamwork. And this is a great way for them to do that. It also gave them opportunities with [INAUDIBLE] and the opportunity to go out of state to see other things, other than what is just inside of our district here, within our city. They got an opportunity to see outside the world, see that there's opportunities for college and different areas that they could navigate to, not just being here at the school.

So to take that away, and so abruptly is very disappointing, and extremely sad for our children. Thank you for listening.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. Olivia Morales Laura.

Good evening. I was in the band program. And I want to say that-- oh, this thing's timed. Ha!

When I heard the band program was gone, it was really disappointing, man. Like honestly, that-- I'm like blocked now. I can't think.

It was a community. And it was like a family. And it was a culture that was just taken away just like that. And I know a lot of my classmates were crying about it, because the bond we had over the years, [INAUDIBLE] students, and just the band, we worked so hard to build it from nothing. And we worked so hard we would go fundraise galas, and car washes, and bake sales, and whatever just to go to these trips.

A lot of students, they haven't left the state before. They were born here. And they haven't left. And a lot of times we don't got the money to go to see something new.

And that trip kind of opened like a big gate. And we got to go see colleges, and to colleges. And we went to Disneyland, a lot of stuff we wouldn't be able to do because we don't got the money to do that. But with the band, I know a lot of kids seen that.

And we went to USC. And one of my classmates from the band, he went there. And I know that it inspired a lot of students to just push for more, that there's more than just flipping burgers at their high school, to push to go to college and strive for more. That's what it is. I don't know.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you very much. Ana Balcazar.

Hi, so I'm in middle school right now. I'm in eighth grade. And I'm going to Evergreen next year. And I'm part of the music program in Glacier Middle School.

So once I heard the news that Evergreen, the band program wasn't there anymore I was shocked, because I had this plan in high school that I was going to do band. And I heard a lot of stuff from my older brother about the band program. And I was honestly excited about it.

But once I heard that it was gone it really hurt me, because all the chances I could have gotten was just gone like that. And it's kind of put me off balance, because I honestly don't know what I'm going to do in high school now, because that was basically my plan to do band.

And lately I've been trying to follow my brother's footsteps. And he's part of the band program. Well, he was. And since it's gone, I don't know what to do. And also, I just want the band program back.

Because I'm not-- I'm only speaking of this because it's affecting my future, my decisions of having a musical career. It's also affecting kids that are coming from my middle school, seventh and sixth graders that probably don't even know what's going on right now. Because it's affecting their careers as well.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. Joseph Balcazar.

Hello, I was in the band program at Evergreen. And when I heard about the news about the band program being shut down I was devastated, because band, I was going to have a big career in the future. But now that it's been taken away it'll be harder for me.

And it's unfair to the students and parents of the school, because they won't have a chance at it either. And they won't get to experience all the fun stuff that we've done in the past.

Yeah, we've had a lot of fun in the past with the band, like going to California, and going to all these concerts. We've done a lot of like mentoring with colleges. And it's kind of disappointing that the students that are going to Evergreen now and future students, they won't be able to experience that because the band program isn't there. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you, Joseph. Connor Apperson. Connor Apperson. Not here? Thank you. That concludes our speakers for this evening. Thank you, everybody, for showing up and speaking to us this evening.

All right, Dr. Duran, our superintendents' update please.

Yes, thank you. Good evening, everyone. I want to just thank everyone for being here tonight. And really want to add appreciation for everyone that was recognized tonight. It's always a great honor to be able to recognize individuals and groups that just do amazing work to support our students. And it's just wonderful time to be able to honor--

I also want to just thank Mar Vista for being here today, and sharing their good work that's happening at the school. I was able to join last week. And it was a really great experience to be able to walk through, and be able to see it today, actually see all that's really happening. So I can prove and attest to that now.

One of the best parts of my week is school visits. And last week I was in quite a few different schools, and over the last few weeks I've seen so much evidence of schools working on cultural belonging with staff and students, from the [INAUDIBLE] advisory programs, and incorporation of social emotional lessons. Our schools are fully engaged in the vital work that we know will provide invaluable support to our students. We know that the culture of belonging and strategic plan is key to achieving the other goals.

Last week, as just an example, I had the opportunity to go over to Big Picture. Big Picture was having their learning plan surge. And they invited friends of Big Picture, volunteers, other educators, community members to come and meet with students, because their students create individual learning plans. And students in those plans create a vision. They create goals. They create projects.

And so I was able to sit down with three students, and just give them some feedback on their work, and what they're trying to accomplish. And it was really a great experience for me to be able to have that opportunity, to be able to get to know students in a much deeper, deeper level.

A few examples, I had one-- a couple of the students actually working on novels. One student already had 16 chapters they were working on. And they were trying to think about what they're going to incorporate, graphics, or other elements into it.

A couple students talked about learning Spanish and had some plans on how they were going to do that. One student was so courageous they actually wanted to learn statistics, and was already working to figure out how Khan Academy could help him learn statistics now because he didn't want to wait.

And then finally, even simple being able to learn how to draw. Students were trying to think about how they're going to make that happen. But it was really exciting to hear all the different goals and projects that they put together. And I just appreciated giving them feedback.

But just want to shout out to Principal Fred Butts over there, Ed Glasser, the teacher who just invited us out. And just a great example of how you bring community and to support students, which really does help to build upon that culture of belonging.



And then finally, I would just say they're just super excited because we're going to be launching our superintendent student leadership team this year. We'll be launching this month coming up on a Saturday. Really look forward to learning from our amazing students, and just really learn more about how and what we can do to improve the experiences for our students. They really do provide so much information to us. And I just really want to publicly thank them for the work that they do, and thank our team for organizing that.

We plan on working with our students to really help us think about where we are with our budget processes, provide opportunities for them to give us some input. And then we also will be working with them to continue to develop their voice. And I think you can anticipate having some of the students come to board meetings to share their perspectives and thoughts on what we can do to ensure that we're meeting the goals of the strategic plan. So that's all I have for now. Thank you.

Thank you very much. And then our school board reports. No legislative reports coming from the hill. So we'll move on to our directors' reports. I'm going to start with Director Howell.

Thank you. In district four I serve quite a few choice schools. And our choice school application window is now open for most of those schools. We have one virtual option for elementary schools, or students, three schools of choice for middle school, and eight schools and programs of choice at the school level.

And all of these different choices serve a lot of different needs. You just mentioned Big Picture, which is one of them. So to our families and our students out there interested in something that might not be a neighborhood school, you should check out our choice schools and apply. That's all.

Thank you. Director Alvarez.

Thank you, Director Van. Just a notice, there's Life After High School happening next week on October 11. It's being hosted at Highline High School, Life After High School with our college and career team. All high school students and their families are invited. So please keep an eye out for that.

This will be a great opportunity to explore the paths available for post graduation. There will also be workshops and representatives from local colleges, universities, trades, apprenticeships. And also the military will be there.

I also just wanted to say I got invited to Choice. My youngest daughter graduated from there. So Principal Sita always invites me over to come. And so it was beginning to rain. And there was all of them cramped in this little, little room.

And they were so thankful. I got to talk a little bit about-- they wanted to know about what a director does. I remember, Director Howell, when you said talking to middle schoolers about that kind of stuff.

But something that came out of it, they were very appreciative. About a year ago or a little bit over a year ago Dr. Duran and I met with some student leaders from the school. And they had some requests. One of them was about having school lunch services on campus, and also opening the gym up so they have a place to be. And so, one, they said, thank you, thank you, thank you. Food services is on campus. The only thing is they just don't have a place to eat.

And that day it happened to be raining. So there was tables all along some of the covered areas. And they got to eat lunch in the halls. So they said, can you please ask when will our gym be ready for us?

So I said I would bring that back. And then I'm sure someone would get back to them with a timeline. But it was so awesome to see. I mean, this came from the students.

And it's giving them that agency to really speak their mind. They were like, I have a question. I have a question. And time was up. And I said, OK, one more question. And they're like, I just want our gym. We just want our gym. We just want a place to eat when it's raining. We don't have to sit outside.

So I'll leave it that to Dr. Duran so he can communicate back. I know there's a plan in place already. But I think the more we can communicate to youth. They were really excited and thankful. They were like, just let him know we're so thankful we do have student lunch, or the lunch services on campus.

And then I walked the halls to see. So they go in just in one hallway and right back out, because they just get their plate, and then they go outside. And it happened to be raining that day. So I was like, ugh, they got to see what reality was really like for our students there. So just communicate. When will the gym be ready?

I did my part. Back to you, Dr. Duran.

[LAUGHTER]

You hear that, Scott?

You hear that, Scott?

Thank you.

I would just say, it will happen this year. And I also did tell the students last year in that conversation that when it does open we're going to host a dance party there.

All right. He said that you would be taking the dance floor the first dance there. So I committed you to that already. But no, it was just awesome to hear students really speak their mind. They wanted besides-- that was their important one. Like when are we going to have a place to eat where it's dry, and it's not raining, and it's warm?

But the other thing was that appreciative of opportunities they've had there. And just seeing the amount of enthusiasm about learning. They asked a lot about college and career.

Some of them knew me from before around my work in previous, around financial aid, financial aid completion, and stuff. So some of them had questions. It's like, I saw you at that event. But just again, they were very appreciative. And they wanted me to just say that, to thank you very much for listening to them.

And that was it. Back to you, Dr. Van.

Thank you. Dr. Hagos, any updates? Dr. Garcia?

All right, I gotta say somethin'. I can't not say something. As the biggest band geek in the history to sit in this chair I do got to speak my mind a little bit around this issue. But I'm actually going to take a step back. And first I want to-- the young people in the room, I do want to apologize, right?

We are accountable to the decisions that created this situation. And for that I am really, really sorry. No one here intentionally wanted to get rid of a program, or to do anything that would cause this situation. But we are accountable to it. And for that, you deserve an apology for creating these conditions. So for that, god, it hurts me. But I do want to apologize to you all for creating this situation.

And to bring it back, because no one here makes a decision about a specific school, right? We create policies. And we create rules and frameworks holistically. And it's not just about one school. This issue is impacting a lot of schools in our district right now.

And this is the best solution we've created to address this conflict that we've been able to come up. Because year after year I sit in this seat and say, man, we got to figure out how to do this enrollment thing differently. And every year we get a little bit better. We create a little bit chaos. We improve it a little bit better. But we haven't figured it out yet.

And short of that, the best I think I can do right now is apologize, and to keep on pushing us to do something differently, and to make sure that we're still providing the best kind of options we can with the resources we have. So I'll leave it at that. Because as a band geek, oh, this hurts. It hurts.

And I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the Evergreen High School band program that put me to have the opportunities to go off to college, to come back here and serve my community. I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the Evergreen band program. So I do hold this near and dear to my heart.

But I also have to be accountable to the situation. This is on us.

[GROANS]

So that's all I really got to say about that. I know we're doing our best. And I'm proud of that. And I'm also so, so, so angry about it at the same time. And that's it. That's all I got to say.

Thank you, Director Garcia. And for me, if you haven't driven by Tyee High School as of late, there isn't very much. There's a lot of rubble going on. I drive by every day. And just one piece of my memory goes every day.

But it's good memories. And really excited to see what's to come of it, as well as Evergreen. I get to see that on social media, and being able to see the construction and the clearing. So really great to see that happening. And that is it for me.

Move to our consent agenda. Can I please have a motion to approve the consent agenda?

I'll make a motion we approve our consent agenda.

Can I please have a second?

I second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Any opposed? None. Thank you. And then our action items 8.1. This is motion to approve the renewal of the OSPI beginning educator support team grant. Any questions or comments on this one?

The only comment I would like to make is that this program is a phenomenal one. And we're really fortunate to be in a state that supports developing new educators. And the way that they do the best training through OSPI is some of the best professional development I've ever received as an educator. And I've taken their 101, and their 201, and all these different in my role in my other job. So I'm really excited that we are partnering, and the opportunity to fund the mentors that do such great work with our new educators.

Thank you. Any other questions or comments? I hear and see none. Can I please have a motion?

I move that the Highline School Board approve the renewal and acceptance of the 2023-'24 beginning educator support team grant funds in the amount of \$285,000.

I second.

Roll call, please.

Director Hagos.

Yea.

Director Howell?

Yea.

Director Garcia.

Yea.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

Director Van.

Yea.

This motion passes 5 to none.

Thank you very much. 8.2 motion to approve the LAP community partnership.

Yes, thank you, Director Van. I'd like to invite our chief engagement partnership officer, Kisa Henderson to join us tonight to share a few words around this item on the agenda. Thank you.

Good evening, everyone. I also have my partnerships team, Lita O'Donnell and Nicki Fogarty with me to help answer questions that I can't answer. But I just want to give you a little bit of information about this action item before you today. I'm going to read so I don't forget anything.

So the Readiness To Learn, or RTL partnerships are being brought to you for action because it is a requirement by the state for partnerships funded out of RTL to be approved by the school board. RTL funds are an allowable subset of Learning Assistance Program, or LAP, funds for community partners to provide supplemental academic and non-academic supports to students.

Up to 15% of LAP funds are allowable for RTL partnerships. Our partnerships up for action today are less than 3% of our overall LAP budget. On today's agenda there are partnerships that total \$250,000, funding 7 partners that will be serving 17 schools.

The total number of students being served depends on the partnership. And this information can be found in the draft partnership agreements that are attached to your bar. The students who participate in these programs are tracked through our student information system and reported to the state, along with all of the other LAP funded supports that are reported to the state.

The process for identifying these partners is not separate from our larger partnership process. And you'll recall maybe I sent you a memo earlier this year. If you need it again, I'm happy to send it again, because it was a while ago.

So partners submit an application. And they share details about their programming, including scope of services, their capacity, where they would like to serve. And then that information is vetted by our partnerships team. And the partners go into a catalog.

We also provide technical assistance to our partners around this process. We share this catalog with our principals and our family and community engagement specialists, work with our principals on partnership opportunities. And principals submit an interest form. And from there, a cross-departmental team makes matches.

And we take a system wide approach. So we look at our distribution of partners across the district. We look at the types of programs. And we also look at the school's needs. Our ILEDs were a part of that process. And so they were able to speak to schools' annual action plans, and could inform our decision making related to schools' goals.

We do have additional partnerships that are funded out of basic ed and other funding sources. And we also have many partners that are of no cost to the district. Our department helps manage and facilitate these partnerships as well. If you have questions or wonderings about those partners, we have on our website a dashboard, and you can check it out. So that is my information. I'm happy to answer any questions you have.

Questions or comments, directors?

Thank you. I know that you guys have put quite a bit of work behind this in terms of matching partners to programmings needed in schools. It sounds like it's up to the administrators to then engage in the request for partnership. Am I right about that? It sounds like there's a step that an administrator must submit an interest form to then gain access to the matching of a partnership with those who have already been-- you've already vetted for our school district.

Yes.

So when you look at the list of schools receiving the partnership funding, there was a few schools in particular that I'm thinking of. But there are schools that are on the list of high poverty and low performing schools in terms of whatever calibration is done to identify these schools in such kind of way. And those schools are not listed as receiving any services in particular for this programming. Does that mean that they have services outside of this? Or I'm just trying to understand what do they receive in terms of support because of the higher funding allocation for LAP due to their status? Does that make sense?

So outside of partnerships or related to partnerships?

So I guess, for me, it would be-- so I want to know what happens when there is a school who are categorized as low performing and/or high poverty LAP who are not receiving any community partnerships, how are they engaged in the conversation, besides just submitting an interest form if they don't do so?

So related to partnerships, the family and community engagement specialist works directly with the administrators and engages them in the opportunities, explores partners, partnership opportunities. And they, from there, choose. I don't know if you have a particular school in mind. And I think maybe you might have one in your area that you have in mind.

And I personally can't speak to why they chose not to submit. I do know that school has other partnerships that align to some of these other supports. But they're just not one of the Readiness To Learn funded partners. But they do have other partnerships that support. And I do know that they have other supports using--

I believe if they had qualified for LAP funds, they have other supports just outside of the partnerships. And maybe that administrator, or that team has a vision for what the supports look like. And sometimes it includes partnerships, and sometimes it doesn't.

Thank you.

Thank you. Any other questions or comments? Here and see none. Can I please have a motion?

I move that the Highline School Board approve the Readiness To Learn partnerships. I'll need a second.

I second.

Roll call, please.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

Director Hagos.

Yeah.

Director Howell?

Yea.

Director Garcia?

Yea.

Director Van.

Yea.

This motion passes 5 to none.

All right, thank you so much, Kisa, for coming up and presenting. Action item 8.3, this is motion for approval to amend the contract between the special ed department and Sunbelt Staffing LLC in the '23-'24 school year. Any questions or comments on this one? I do have a question.

So do I.

Thank you, Dr. Reinig. In the bar it states, apart from the staffing shortages, the department also noticed a trend of an increased need for one to one support. And in our area, Highline has the most one to one support for our students. Can you help me understand how that all-- how that all works in regards to our students?

Sure, if you have six months or so. But I'll do my best in a few minutes. So yes, one to ones are assigned to students with special education needs, served through an IEP with needs that cannot be accommodated in any other way. It is not something that we rush to.

In some ways the constant presence of a one to one support can, in fact, be a most restrictive environment. And that is something that we want to move away as soon as students show readiness. In terms of the increase right now, much in similar ways that staffing is adjusted in other areas of the system, it is a factor of the students that come to us. So students may come to us from other districts and have a one to one support outlined in their IEP. And we are obligated then to fulfill that need and adhere to that identification.

There are cases in which we have students coming to us with previously undiagnosed needs, and we put some temporary supports, so not a one on one documented as an IEP, but program or classroom support to support their needs as they adjust to their new environment. And we adjust to learning and supporting them. So those are a couple of ways.

I appreciate that. Thank you.

I do have one question. I know that-- I think it was the month of July. We had an agenda item, and there was quite a bit of requests for special education funding, around 4 point-- I can't remember. \$4 point something million. And the idea was that it would be a combination of the requests that came throughout the year, kind of done more so ahead of time at the beginning of the year so we're prepared for the funding, rather than continuously funding different programs.

So I guess I'm curious then, why-- with that thought behind ensuring that we started the year off with enough funding for special education to carry out their services, why this additional request now?

Thank you. Yes, I think it's important to know that each of these contracts are an up to amount. And this is work that the special education team, teaching learning department is engaging in partnership with our human resources department. Our goal is to hire and support our Highline staff.

So these are agency contracts that we utilize in situations where we're unable to recruit and retain our paraeducators or special education staff. They're up to amounts. We also follow all of our business services practices in terms of how we identify the agencies that we partner with.

In this situation other agencies that had been previously approved through those processes actually could not fulfill the request. So they themselves did not have the staffing. So it's not necessarily an increase in the funding so much as it is a difference in where the funding will go, which agency we will be partnering with.

Thank you.

I'll add also, very similar to Director Hagos, we kind of had a request around making sure when-- because we had so many contracts last year, and we understand it's up to. And so we had had a request that as we move forward I think planning for the worst case scenario, and up to, so we don't have to be coming every single time and approving-- it just doesn't feel good around having to approve more, and more, and more when if we can-- you mentioned having an amount up to, if we could, I think, better planning for the future as far as coming to us at the beginning where these contracts are being developed or reviewed, and giving us the worst case scenario. And we know we won't spend it all hopefully. But it will be up to that.

So I just think it just feels-- just gives a bad vibe that here we are again. We had already approved a large amount of money. And here we are again.

And I totally get it. I know that it's out of our control. But the more that we can do that and safeguard that with the understanding it's up to that amount so we don't have to-- it just doesn't feel good to continue almost in every board meeting having to put up some more money. And I mean, just being totally transparent and being upfront at the beginning. So please.

Yes, absolutely, that is a work in progress. We hear you. We feel the same way. I remind myself sometimes, if it's helpful, that these dollar amounts, they look large when we're talking about dollars. But when we think about them as they result in staff and staff FTE, this particular up to amount would equate to no more than six staff members across the entire district.

So I hear you. And we absolutely do our best to project. But similar to some of the implications that you heard spoken to earlier tonight around staffing adjustments across the system, so is true for special education as well. But absolutely, we continue to improve in our projections and our prediction of what outside support will be needed.

Thank you. I know some of this is out of our control. I just think that, as trying to be good fiduciaries of our funds, and making sure that-- and we know that even though it's dollars that that means that our students are getting what they need. So I can totally agree and equate to that. But I appreciate.

Just I know that we're all trying our best. Dr. Garcia mentioned it perfectly that we're doing the best that we can, all of us. But just wanting to make sure.

OK, thank you.

Mine is more of a comment, and just a thought. And you can pop in if you'd like. But I feel like as we are getting clearer around inclusion and what that looks like, and setting up systems, and getting teachers proper training, I'm thinking IEPs will be written differently. And we might start to see numbers like this go down. When students are re-evaluated every year, perhaps the need for a one to one might start to decrease as we start to increase other sorts of support in our inclusion model.

And I will just say, working in a school right now with 800 students, we are getting IEPs from all over that are written very differently, even within the same district. And some are written in a way that is very unaware of what learning looks like in the gen ed setting. So they're asking for modifications and accommodations for things we don't even do, like timed tests, and things like that.

So I think as we start to tighten up as a system, hopefully IEPs won't be written in a way that is so costly. I don't know if that makes sense to what I'm saying. But it seems to me that as we improve what inclusion looks like, this won't be as necessary.

We're hoping that is the case.

Any other questions or comments? OK.

I'll say a quick one. I just want to thank the board for the approval of the \$25 an hour for our paraeducators. Because that will be a really big help for us to try to actually recruit and have our own staff because the agency fees are very high. And that's what we end up paying for. So thank you for that approval, because we will be doing a major campaign to try to recruit and retain paraeducators into our system.

Thank you for that, Dr. Duran. Can I please have a motion?

With that I move that the Highline School Board approves Special Education Department to increase Sunbelt Staffing LLC's contract amount from \$245,000 to \$575,000 with any minor additions, deletions, or modifications deemed necessary by the superintendent. And I'll need a second.

I second.

Roll call, please.



Director Garcia.

Yea.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

Director Hagos.

Yea.

Director Howell.

Yea.

Director Van.

Yea.

This motion passes 5 to none.

Thank you. Action item 8.4, 8.5, and 8.6 were moved to consent. So we'll move to 8.7. This is the motion to approve Highline High School photovoltaic system, addition project closeout purchase order CP220030. Any questions or comments?

I have just a quick comment. I wanted to shout out the kids at the school who worked tirelessly to fund their project and have collected, I want to say, over \$11 million-- or \$11,000, sorry. \$11,000, not \$11 million. But still, for students to get together and care this much about a project, to put something forward with funding I think was phenomenal. So I just wanted to shout those kids out.

Thank you. Any other comments or questions?

I will just say now that we know we can do it for one school, we can do it for all of our schools. And it's going to save us money in the long term. So I say, let's keep pushing the edge. Let's keep leading like we are with our students in front. So kudos.

Ditto that. Thank you. Can I please have a motion?

Oh, before that I thought I'd just name Scott and let him-- no, I'm kidding. I told him I was going to bring him up here and ask like, I want to figure how much it would cost right now for all the schools-- no, just kidding. No, I just wanted to give him a hard time. Now, we can move on.

[LAUGHTER]

He was ready to go. Can I please have a motion?

I move-- oh, let me get this right. I move that the Highline School Board approve the closure of purchase order CP220030 for the Highline High School photo-- oh, man, I shouldn't have said it. Photo--

How do you pronounce that?

Voltaic.

Voltaic?

Yeah.

--system addition project.

Hmm.

Thank you.

Can I get a second?

I'll second that.

Roll call, please.

Director Hagos.

Yea.

Director Garcia.

Yea.

Director Howell?

Yea.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

Director Van.

Yea.

This motion passes 5 to none.

Thank you. And that concludes our action items. We have three intro items. First one is 9.1, motion to approve the highly capable students program state formula grant application '23-'24 school year.

Yep, and I'd like to invite Dr. Janet Parker, executive director in teaching and learning, to do a short presentation on this intro item. Welcome, Dr. Parker.

Good evening, board. The plan that we're going to introduce tonight is our highly capable plan. And it serves as a requirement which would provide an estimated \$600,000 in revenue to support student testing and identification process, supplemental program materials, and professional learning.

Our highly capable program plan outlines programmatic data, service delivery models across grade bands, and priorities for the '23-'24 school year, in accordance with policy 219B. Some highlights of this year's program include we have 429 students, identified in 2nd through 12th grade that are participating in highly capable services across our system. There are shifts in identification are driven by the new legislation.

We will continue to universally screen first through seventh grade students through a comprehensive data review. Additionally, we will administer a cognitive screener in grades second and fifth. Last year this was in first and second. This is in alignment with what other districts are doing as well.

The new legislation places less emphasis on referrals, and more on universal screening practices. As a result, we have named in the HCP that this will be the last year we will accept referrals. In our HCP we acknowledge that our numbers have been disproportionate to our population, specifically race. Through the multidisciplinary committee process, we will continue to refine our identification practices.

We continue to see families opting in to the HC learning plan service model at a greater rate than challenge. Reasons cited including wanting to stay in their home school. Through professional learning we are also addressing. One example of this was middle school math teachers recently got together to discuss what a level four work would look like, which aligns with our standards based instruction and grading. While this benefits all students, it especially benefits our highly capable students.

What questions can I answer?

Thank you. Any questions or comments? You have none. Or, yeah, sure. Director Hagos.

Yeah, I've got just two questions. Thank you for coming up and kind of providing an oral report around some of the things that you had shared by email. I appreciate it.

In terms of the goals around high cap, how is that? How is progress monitoring or progress in terms of how students are doing in the program shared with our families?

One of the things that was purchased last year is Thrive. And through onboarding, all students have an individualized learning plan. And families have access to what that looks like ongoing.

Thank you. And the second question I have is around screening process for the possibility of high cap preschools. What does that look like for our preschool students? I know you mentioned the universal screenings done for elementary school. But say there are kids in our preschool program who do show capabilities higher than their age or grade. What does it look like for them in terms of early entrance to kindergarten or options like that?

Because preschool is not universal it looks different. We don't have an opt-in to that program. And so one of the things we do is a lot of observation and trying to meet the needs as best we see fit. Once they get into kindergarten that's when we see OSPI has plans for that we start looking at kindergarten and first grade.

Thank you.

Mhm.

Thank you, Director Hagos. Any other questions or comments?

Just a quick wondering. So it says approval would approve the highly capable state grant application. So this application is a yearly application that we submit. So it's not like a new grant application we're going. It's just the renewal. OK, just wanted to make sure.

In order to get the funding we have to submit that every year.

OK, just wanted to confirm that. Thank you.

Any other questions or comments? None. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Jenna.

Intro item 9.2, this is motion to approve resolution number 26-23 for certification of the 2024 excess property taxes. Questions or comments? Fun topic around taxes.

Hear and see none. Thank you. 9.3, this is motion to approve the purchase of propane powered school buses from Bryson Sales and Services of Washington. Any questions or comments?

Yeah, I'm--

Here we go.

I queued up Scott for this one.

Bring him up.

Bring him up.

[LAUGHTER]

You're in the hot seat now.

Are you ready?

Ready.

Actually, I mean, you already answered most of these. So I had a couple questions about are these-- do we have to build an infrastructure for the propane? All this kind of stuff. But we already got buses. We already got a whole fleet of these kind of buses. And we're just adding-- thank you for answering these questions.

The last question I had, though-- I would really like to hear more about the vision of how do we start to get to a place where we find the resources, the service to phase out the diesel buses. And just any thoughts you have that you want to share behind that?

Yeah, happy to share on that. I wanted to just, real quick on the previous one, on 8.7 the students did raise \$11,000. But they also filled out and applied for the grants that generated \$250,000 toward that project. So these students went way above and beyond. I wanted to make sure they get credit for that, that piece of the work.

Thank you. So for our long term plan, and for moving away from diesel, our goal is to move away from diesel as the least clean option that we currently have for school buses. We do a lot of work with the new modern equipment to make sure what we do use diesel on we use all the appropriate DEF and keep everything, filters maintained, run all the maintenance cycles on time to make sure we're burning as clean of a vehicle as we can.

That being said, there are other options out there that are better for the environment and better for our community. And those include options like the propane buses, have significantly cleaner fuel, costs less per gallon, but is not quite as mileage efficient, doesn't generate the same horsepower or BTUs. But still works out as less expensive per mile and a reduction in maintenance. Has a smaller engine, quieter engine, cleaner engine.

The diesel or the electric bus is right now the direction to go for the cleanest option, both short term and long term for the district. And I can tell you, I've been working in electrification of school buses. It was 25 years ago when we ordered a plug-in hybrid electric 72 passenger bus at Lake Chelan School District.

That bus cost almost \$400,000 all funded through grants. And that was the first one in Washington State, and the seventh one in the country. And the technology was archaic compared to where we're at right now.

The changes that have happened have created a bus that has a lower center of gravity. So it operates better in bad weather conditions. It has eliminated the majority of the maintenance, the required maintenance on vehicles. You don't have any more oil change. You don't have fan belts. You don't have-- all of the moving parts that are under the hood of a regular bus aren't there.

So the ideal world is we would just simply, every time we needed a bus we would replace it with an electric vehicle. The state funding model for student transportation replacing of school buses is a depreciation model based on the value of the bus in the 13th year of its life cycle. So every year you get a check for 1/13 of the value. And it goes into a TVF fund that comes from the state. It goes into a transportation vehicle fund.

And at the end of the 13th year you get a check for the balance of what that bus costs to replace on that day, minus what you've already been reimbursed for that bus. And so you should end up-- if you stay current with your system, you should end up with enough dollars on that last day of the 13th year to replace that bus with the same vehicle without negatively impacting that TVF fund.

Now, when you replace a-- and I'm going to use real general numbers here. These aren't accurate. But if you take a \$200,000 diesel, 84 passenger bus, and replace it with a \$300,000 electric bus, you have to take \$100,000 more out of that TVF fund than you actually are paying-- than you're being reimbursed for the bus you're replacing. So that has a negative drawdown on the TVF, which reduces the ability to replace your school bus fleet on an appropriate schedule to make sure you don't end up with 50-year-old vehicles in your fleet.

So it's important to keep that in consideration. Additionally, as we transition to electric there's an infrastructure build out that's different than anything we do with fossil fuels, meaning we have to have the electrical charging systems. We have to have the wiring, the capacity, the transformers, the plug-in stations for each one of these vehicles. So the grant funding is important to offset that difference between the bus you're replacing and what it's costing to replace with electric.

We simply can't afford to go out and spend 30% more on vehicles plus infrastructure and continue to replace buses at the pace we need to replace them to maintain a quality fleet. So grants are a great opportunity. The grant we've got an application in for right now, which we believe we stand a good chance on is going to replace 25 diesel buses with electric. PSE has not only written a letter of support for us, but it actually has said because we've already done six and we have a good record with what we're doing with the electric fleet, and with solar programs, and with all the different programs that we have, they have offered to partner with us on this, and actually do the infrastructure, including all the charging stations for 25 more buses.

So that letter went in with the grant application. We'll find out in October if we're successful on that one. Hopefully, that answers your question.

Thank you. And I guess, assuming we, for whatever reason we-- I'm sure we're going to kill it and we're going to get that grant. But assuming we don't how many buses for next year are we going to, for lack of a better word, surplus? Like what's the sequence for next year? And I guess what I would love to know is if we wanted to put our organizing campaign hats on, and we wanted to figure out how to bridge that gap, is it like \$100,000, \$150,000 that we're trying to bridge for each bus?

That's a great question. And it's going to depend, first of all, on which bus. 72 passenger is the type C bus, or the one that has the nose on the front of it. That's the six that we have right now.

If we go to the larger, 84 passenger buses there's a bigger cost difference between what we're replacing and what we're purchasing. And then partnership with infrastructure also affects that number. So I can put some scenarios together for you if you would like that.

That would be awesome.

We are doing another grant application for another three buses through Department of Ecology, similar to the first two cycles we did that allowed us to purchase the six we have.

Awesome. Great work. Thank you.

Any other questions or comments?

Just maybe in-- it doesn't have to be here, but maybe we'll spend some time. I'd like to learn a little bit more about what the differences are, pros and cons around propane and electric and that kind of stuff. But that's just for my learning. So we can spend some time.

Absolutely.

Thank you.

All right, that's it. Thanks, Scott.

Yep.

Just kidding. I got a question for you. No, I'm just messing.

[LAUGHTER]

Well, that concludes our intro items. I think with that said, any items added to the consent agenda?

Before we go there, I forgot to mention during my reports, I will be taking some time off from my work and having to take care of some personal matters. I will be available, but will be only through Zoom or phone call coming in. I will be leaving probably the state and the country next week, and returning on the 30th of October, just FYI. But I'll be still able to join, but just not in person.

Thank you. That said, any items added that you would like to add to the consent agenda? Hear and see none. Can I please have a motion to adjourn?

I make a motion we adjourn.

Second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Any opposed? None. Thank you very much.