

Highline Public Schools | School Board Meeting - March 6, 2024

Good evening, everybody. I see everybody was just looking at the clock and let it strike 6:00. I was going to wait a few more seconds. So welcome to tonight's school board meeting. I just want to thank the board and staff for the conversation at our budget work session this evening. Can we all please stand up for the Pledge of Allegiance?

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States [AUDIO OUT] to the republic [AUDIO OUT].

Thank you. Roll call, please.

Director Tidholm?

Present.

Director Hagos?

Here.

Director Petrini?

Here.

Director Van?

Here. And Director Alvarez has an excused absence. And to my right is our superintendent Dr. Ivan Duran. Any calls or changes or additions to our board meeting agenda this evening?

I do have some changes to request. Give me a second. Let me grab my page. OK, so you've got a few things in the action items that I want to move to the consent agenda.

I'm looking at action item 8.1, 8.3, and 8.4. We've had several weeks to look at this and offer questions and comments. And if there are no more questions and comments, I'd like to move it into the consent agenda.

Thank you. And that's motion to move 8.1, 8.3, and 8.4 to our consent agenda. Any questions or comments on that, Directors? I hear and see none. Can I please have a second?

OK, I'll second that.

All in favor.

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Any opposed? None. Thank you very much. OK, we're going to move on to our recognitions this evening. We have quite a few, and then we're going to go into a school presentation. First up is Read Across America.

Whereas, the citizens of Highline Public Schools stand firmly committed to promoting reading as the catalyst of our students' future academic success, their preparation for America's jobs of the future and their ability to compete in a global economy. And whereas, Highline Public Schools has provided significant leadership in the area of community involvement in the education of our youth, grounded in the principle that education investment is the key to the community's well-being and long-term quality of life. And whereas, National Education Association's Read Across America, a national celebration of reading on March 2nd 2024 promotes reading and adult involvement in the education of our community's students.

Now therefore, the board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools call on citizens of Highline Public Schools to ensure that every child has a safe place to read with a caring adult. And be it further resolved that this district enthusiastically endorses National Education Association's Read Across America and recommits our community to engage in programs and activities to make America's children the best readers in the world. We'd like to ask Michael Hecklinger to come on up and to receive our [INAUDIBLE].

All right, come on up.

[APPLAUSE]

And we'd like to invite all other librarians--

All librarians as well. Are--

--yes-- that are in the audience, if they can join in.

All other librarians, come on up.

[APPLAUSE]

I'm Mike Hecklinger from Madrona Elementary. I have Maria Pina from Hazel Valley and Trina Samson from Mount View, and Kim Johnson-- sorry, from Shorewood-- Seahurst. Oh, my gosh.

[LAUGHTER]

[APPLAUSE]

Looking for the perfect angle.

Whoa!

OK. One more just in case. Sorry. 1, 2, 3. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

And our next recognition presented by Director Hagos, our School Retirees Appreciation Week.

It's not just you today, Director Petrini. It's me as well. OK. My mic is working now. And I'm really excited to be able to read this recognition.

Whereas, Highline Public Schools and the Washington State School Retirees Association recognize educators who have retired from active teaching, administration, or a specialized field of teaching of the teaching profession. And whereas, Highline Public Schools and the Washington State School Retirees Association educate and assist retirees in meeting the special challenges they face after retiring and improving their general welfare. And whereas, Highline Public Schools aids in advancing education by supporting high standards of education, and thereby strengthens the status of the teaching profession.

And whereas, Highline Public School promotes group and individual involvement in charitable projects and activities and maintains interest and participation in educational and community activities. And whereas, Highline Public Schools supports and encourages retired educators to remain active in the education profession through volunteer activities associated with learning. Now therefore, the board and the superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby proclaim March 18 through the 24, 2024, as School Retirees Appreciation Week in Highland Public Schools and urge all citizens to join in this special observance.

And so today, we've got two folks accepting this. Really excited to see these two folks on the list. I see one smiling directly at me. So it's Jane Smith and ZZ Newman.

[APPLAUSE]

Did you want to say anything?

Did you guys want to say anything?

Did you guys want to-- do have some-- would you like to say anything before we take a photo? OK.

[LAUGHTER]

Always up to you.

And if there are any other school retirees in the audience if you'd like to join the picture, please.

[AUDIO OUT]

I do. I do.

[LAUGHTER]

OK.

[AUDIO OUT]

OK, 1, 2, 3. One more. 1, 2, 3. It's not wanting to do one more.

Hold on one second. Let's try it again. Sorry.

[INAUDIBLE]

Sorry, 1, 2, 3. OK, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

And I'm going to be presenting our Social Workers Week Proclamation. Whereas, school social workers in Highland Public Schools and across the nation serve as vital members of the educational team playing a central role in creating a positive school climate and partnership between the home, school, and community to ensure student academic success. And whereas, school social workers support the educational, social, and emotional development of all students by decreasing the impact of barriers to academic success.

Whereas, school social workers participate in the developmental of global citizens by promoting skills for a lifetime and lifelong learning. And whereas, school social workers provide interventions to address challenges such as mental health, behavioral difficulties, disabilities, crisis response, poverty, bullying, abuse, grief, addiction, et cetera to enable students to achieve academic goals. Whereas, school social workers assist families in accessing resources to improve circumstances and the readiness to learn foundation of their children.

Whereas, it is fitting that school social workers are recognized-- will be recognized for the important role that they play in the lives and education of students and their families. Now therefore, the board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby proclaim that March 3 through 9, 2024, is National School Social Work Week in Highline and urge all citizens to join us in honoring and recognizing the dedication and hard work of all school social workers. Can I please have [? Keisa ?] and [? Val ?] come on up and say something? And then, we'll do a picture.

[INAUDIBLE]

[APPLAUSE]

Good evening. I'm happy to introduce the majority of our social work team. Our social workers do a wide breadth of work, including working with our teen parents, working with schools when there is a crisis or an imminent situation. They support around different assessments and referrals and working closely with our other support staff. And they are an integral part of our support team.

And they're invaluable. So I'm going to have them come up. And as I see their faces, then I'll remember their--

[LAUGHTER]

[? Val ?] was with them. She knows who's here.

And you're a social worker?

We're both social workers.

We're social workers. We are social workers.

[? Janet, ?] and [? Nancy, ?] [? Dana, ?] [? Anne-Marie, ?] [? Jennifer. ?] And where's [? Rosie ?] and [? baby? ?]

All right, can you give them around of applause and come on up?

[APPLAUSE]

[INDISCERNIBLE CHATTER]

We're going to need to get a little bit closer in this way.

[AUDIO OUT]

Yeah.

OK, 1, 2, 3. 1, 2, 3. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

We have one more recognition, and then we're going to need the retirees to come back up because the camera malfunctioned. But wait for it, OK? Wait for it. I think it was the shirt. And our last recognition is our Education Support Professionals Week and presented by Director Tidholm.

Whereas, education support professionals are involved in nearly every aspect of education, maintaining buildings and grounds, preparing and serving meals, keeping school facilities clean and orderly, assisting in the classroom, providing information technology services, administrative support functions, safe transportation, a secure and healthy environment, and many other specialized services. And whereas, these dedicated individuals deserve recognition and thanks for the outstanding work they are doing in their communities and for the children enrolled in Highline Public Schools. And whereas, there are 1,071 education support professionals working with and helping children enrolled in Highline Schools.

And whereas, education support professionals are instrumental in fulfilling the district's paramount duty to prepare all students for the future they choose. And whereas, by supporting the learning environment, education support professionals are crucial partners with teachers, parents, and administrators in our public schools. Now therefore, the board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby proclaim March 11 through the 15, 2024, as Education Support Professionals Week in Highline and urged citizens to join us in honoring and recognizing the dedication and hard work of all education support professionals.

And we have with us [? Federico Garcia, ?] Monica Droppelman, and [? Frank Lucketts. ?] If you all would, come forward. Would you like to say a word before your photo? Nope.

[LAUGHTER]

[APPLAUSE]

I know there's a lot more support professionals out there. So please come on up and have your picture taken.

[LAUGHS]

OK. OK. 1, 2. One more. 1, 2, 3.

Woo!

[APPLAUSE]

[AUDIO OUT]

[CHEERS, APPLAUSE]

OK. 1, 2-- one more. 1, 2, 3. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

All right, alongside the recognitions showcased tonight, we have many more throughout the month of March. We invite you to visit our website and look at our calendar to explore these additional recognitions. There's a lot here. So please bear with me.

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, Educational Educator Wellness Month, National Music in our Schools Month, National Nutrition Month, National Reading Month, Women's History Month, Youth Art Month, Teen Mental Awareness Day, National Foreign Language Week, Maintenance Worker Appreciation Day, International Schools Meal Day, National Schools Breakfast Week, and just those are a lot of recognitions.

And I know for Director Tidholm and I, we have two birthdays because March 24 is National Stephanie Day. March 27 is-- there is a National Joe's Day, so just to let you guys know that. So please celebrate throughout this month, just celebrating all of our staff for supporting our schools. With that--

Yeah, now, we have a school presentation. I'd like to invite one of our executive directors, Sarah Talbot, to come up and introduce our school tonight. Welcome, Sarah. Sarah is one of our instructional leaders, executive director. Welcome.

Hi. Thank you so much. I'm here to introduce Corbin Busby, who's the proud principal of Hilltop Elementary School. He's the third-- this is his third year as the principal of Hilltop. And they are doing some incredible work there. I think it would be fun for any of you to go visit. It's a wonderful place.

Welcome, Corbin.

Thank you so much for having me here tonight. It's truly an opportunity. I feel very excited to share some of the highlights and hopes that we have for our school. So just wanting to start off is, Who is Hilltop? Most often when people ask me, what school are you at?

I just say we're the happiest place in Western Washington. And then, there's the follow-up question of, tell me more about that. So some of the key highlights that are most important to know about our school is that we are a-- our kindergarten to fifth grade is a dual-language program. So our students have the opportunity to receive instruction in both English and Spanish. We are one of the first dual-language schools in the Highline Public Schools.

So it's very much something that we have a great deal of pride in. In addition, we are a hub of early childhood education programs. At our school, we have five ECE programs with three developmental pre-K programs, a Ready-K, and an ECEAP program. In addition, we're just a school that has had a long-term commitment and belief in the wellness and social-emotional well-being of students and staff. And what is true for us and what we're hoping to continue to be more true and to realize more fully in the future is that we're a school that is inclusive and welcoming to all students in our neighborhood.

So tonight, I really am going to speak to two priorities-- one of them is being the inclusion of all students, and the second one is teacher clarity to promote student independence, and how both of these priorities really align to Highline's goals. So inclusion of all students, for us, is really creating a culture of belonging. Because I said before, we really want all students who want to enroll in our dual-language program who are in our community to have access to the spaces and learning with their peers. It's just really central to something that we believe.

So we've been one of the elementary schools that's really pioneered the work of inclusion so that we can welcome back students and welcome just continuing them from the time that they're three years old until fifth grade. So the work of inclusion has required the work of the head, the heart, and the mind.

And it was required us to really think about how do we align our resources. So how do we make strategic decisions to think about creating a school-wide schedule that allows all students to have access to core instruction so that they're not being pulled out for their SDI, and so that they don't create gaps in learning when we're attempting to accelerate? In addition, we've really been thoughtful about, how do we align our continuum of supports and services? As a school that has so many early childhood opportunities, we've been thoughtful about creating a simultaneous pathway so that students can go from pre-K into kindergarten with cohesion.

So from the work of including all students, we've seen some really exciting progress, particularly in math, that you can see here. So this year, we're not pulling out students to receive SDI or Specially Designed Instruction in math. And so they're learning it with their peers. And so this year, students with IEPs at midway through the year have made 41% medium progress towards their growth goal. This is a 10% increase from last winter.

In addition, 20% of our students with IEPs have already achieved their annual growth goal for math. It's a comparison to 14% last year. So we're just really seeing that targeting the students and adjusting how we're thinking about how best to support them is leading to increased growth. And overall, an exciting-- or a headline that we have from this year is that students with IEP's growth is actually tracking ahead of peers with IEPs, which is just not a truth that we've had in years past.

So we are seeing a lot of progress in math. We're not seeing the same progress in literacy just yet. And so we're really trying to learn what's working in math and how do we replicate that in literacy. Because on the literacy side, students with IEPs are tracking a little bit behind of what they did last year in regards to median progress and only a slight improvement of students who have already reached their annual growth goal in reading.

So bilingual and biliterate, as I started, is really just at the core of who we are. As a dual-language school, it's very central in our commitment that we make to students and families that we're really preparing students to be bilingual and biliterate individuals. Where we're really continuing to focus this year is how do we ensure academic excellence through the lens of bilingualism and biliteracy. Because we want students to be able to read and to speak in two languages, but we also want them to be able to advocate, and argue, and write in a high quality.

And so our focus around this has been really conversating and learning about how do we increase rigor in our classrooms and doing that through standards-based instruction. So throughout this school year, what we've really done is created spaces and opportunities for teachers to deepen their understanding of what the Common Core standards are asking them to do and how best to provide instruction and scaffolding for students so that all students have opportunities to demonstrate mastery of the standards.

So in regards to one of the first ways that we can feel confident that teachers are providing high quality instruction that's aligned to the standards is that teachers have to fully know what is it that I'm teaching. And so we can really see in our walkthroughs, which is one of the ways that we're measuring that is going into classrooms and seeing what is the instruction that's happening.

And what we see is in the majority of classrooms that we visit that there are content objectives displayed and visible throughout the lesson, which means that teachers have an understanding of this is what I'm teaching and this is what I want students to be learning during this time. In addition, we can see that the majority of these objectives are also aligned to the Common Core State Standards, which increases our confidence that students have access to the rigorous instruction.

Our area of growth and where we're really focusing in on for the remainder of this year is not yet do we see that responsibility shifting to students. Right now, the majority of our students cannot name the content objective that's happening in their classroom during our walkthroughs. And so our teachers have that clarity. But we recognize that the students are the learners and that they have to know the objective in order to have that continued growth. So that's what we're really working on.

So I could continue to talk about the wonderful things that are happening at Hilltop and the work that we're doing, but I think that what's most interesting is to have the opportunity to hear from students and families at our school. So we have prepared a short video where we're going to have the opportunity to do that.

[INAUDIBLE] [SPEAKING SPANISH]

The staff is incredible. From the leadership, to the parents, to the teachers, everyone is so incredible, helpful, very passionate about the students and helping them learn, meeting the students wherever they're at.

[SPEAKING SPANISH]

[INAUDIBLE]

[SPEAKING SPANISH]

How do you know?

Because everybody likes to show compassion and is super sweet to me.

[SPEAKING SPANISH]

Yes.

How do you know?

Because everybody knows me and I feel welcome here.

I've learned Spanish. I've learned how to be kind to others. And I've learned how to keep and make good friendships.

Yes. [SPEAKING SPANISH]

So I have a five-year-old son that is in the developmental preschool Hilltop. And it's been an incredible journey. The staff has been so accommodating and helpful, answering my questions, seeking for ways to include him-- or, thinking as well, then moving into kindergarten next year. And I just see the entire staff in the building really just pressing in to this desire for inclusion in all levels. And it's just exciting to see it from a preschool level, but then transitioning into kindergarten, and then through the whole five years here at Hilltop.

[SPEAKING SPANISH]

Oh, all right. So there's also just like some very tangible successes that I wanted to make sure that we had the opportunity to close with tonight. And I think the sense of belonging, students and our families really spoke to that in the video, and then our Panorama data really highlights the truth of it as well in a quantitative way.

That's 68% of our third to fifth graders report positively to a sense of belonging. This is an increase of 17% since 2022 and an increase of 6% from 2023. And then in addition, we have 70% of our third through fifth graders respond favorably to the question of, how well do people at your school understand you as a person? So the students really feel as though they're cared for, that they belong in our school, and that we understand them.

The other celebration that we're just really wanting to highlight as well is the math growth that we're seeing and in particular how we're really shrinking students who are at tier three, so students who are furthest away from grade level. We've reduced that - the number of students in that category by 21% from the fall. We're also just really proud that the students who historically are furthest from educational justice, we're actually seeing we're shrinking it even further for them.

So when we're thinking about students who've been identified as multilingual, we've shrunk it by 27%. Students with IEPs, it shrunk by 20%. And our Black and African-American students, it shrunk by 28% there.

So just continuing in our next steps and our journey to include all students, I just told staff today that journey is always going to be evolving and changing. And so it's going to require us to be flexible.

But for us, I think that it's really, how are we going to include all students in all spaces so that they have access to learning? So thinking about how do we learn from what's happening in math to boost it in literacy, but also thinking about creating that access and opportunities and recess and specialists as well, and then supporting students communication needs. So thinking about students who may not have the skills yet to communicate using their voice in the ways that I can. So thinking about how can we create scaffolding and supports for them throughout the day?

And then for teacher clarity, for student independence, it's just thinking about shifting that responsibility further to students. And the way that we can do that is giving students feedback, and then giving them opportunities to regularly progress monitor. So questions or comments?

Thank you. Directors, questions?

No question, but a comment. I'm a huge fan and advocate for the dual language. My son is in dual language also at Cascade, so I really appreciate everything that you guys are doing for the dual language.

Thank you. Director Petrini.

Sure, if I may ask a few questions. Thank you for that presentation. That was enjoyable to hear from the students themselves. Can you do a quick typical day of what a student walks through when they're doing dual language? Just for those who are not as familiar, what does the day look like going from Spanish to English classes? And which classes are they taking throughout the day?

Yeah, absolutely. So one of the things that we've really tried to be intentional about for students is that their language of instruction only shifts at natural breaks. We think that supports students with just the transitions as well. So thinking about this-- or I want to lead with that information. So our students spend half of their day in one language.

So when you come in you are going to have literacy in, let's say, Spanish, and then you're going to have a content instruction in Spanish as well. So at our school, what they do is two days of math instruction in Spanish, and then three days of science instruction in Spanish. Then, students would go to lunch or recess, return to class, and then the language of instruction would shift, so they would have literacy and English at that time, and then math instruction in English.

OK.

Specialists also fits in there as well. Our students do have music and PE, which is, for us, all in English.

OK, great. So if they're switching from one language to another every few days, is that creating-- you talked about the content objectives of only 30% of those students meeting those needs. Does that-- by the time they get out of Hilltop and move on to middle school, are they equally proficient in both their math and their language arts in both of those languages?

Yes. So really what we are trying-- because every day, they have half their day in English and half their day in Spanish. And we have our dual language teachers are collaborating together to make sure that we're covering all of the Common Core State Standards. So it does require bridging across the languages. So at the end of each unit, what teachers do is they have an instructional strategy called the bridge where students connect what they maybe learned in Spanish to what they know in English to build the vocabulary.

Because what we know in our brain is held there. And often, the language is just the way that we're communicating it. So it's-- at the end of units, we support students with the vocabulary to demonstrate mastery in both languages.

All right. Last question. So where do most of these students feed to next? Is it like Cascade? Is it another dual-language middle school or do they go back to their districts that they're coming from?

Yeah, most of our students go to Glacier.

OK.

Yeah. And then, some of the students make selections to go some of the other choice middle schools across the district.

OK, thank you.

Yeah.

Thank you. Director Hagos.

OK, so I've got to start out with just saying the sense of belonging, and the joy, and the fun that I saw in your slides and in your kids kind of in their interviews was really nice to see. It really warmed my heart to see that. And I was looking at your numbers and you talked about that the 68%, almost 70% of the kids feel a sense of belonging. I recall Director Van's-- echoed Director Van's message around fun, and happiness, and joy, and how important that is in the work that we do. And I see it with your kids so just thank you.

Joy then does translate to a sense of safety. Sense of safety then does translate to being ready to learn. So these things do matter. And I appreciate you putting your effort into that. And it was just fun to see those photos too.

So that's kind of what I wanted to start with. I think it's really important that you know that I see that. Also, I was blown away by your kindergartners abilities in being able to show their progression around literacy and math. I think you had the highest growth, around 20%, for kindergartners in literacy and math. I know that wasn't on your slide, but I was like, you need to point that out.

Because you talk about those what is it four or five preschool programs that you've got in your school, and I'm like way to go. That's why I was cheering you on. I wonder if it's a correlation between the fact that you've got a preschool program in your building that can then help you capture those kindergartners and really push them forward.

So it was really exciting to see that. I want you to know I noticed that as well. And I'm curious. Do you think it's that or is it something else? What do you think is contributing to your increased rate of literacy and math for kindergartners?

I absolutely think that it's tied. So prior to me coming-- or prior to me becoming principal, the felt experience often by our pre-K teachers is that they existed on an island outside of our school. And so we had our pre-K program and then our K through 5 program. I have an early childhood education background. And so for me, I really recognize that. And I thought, how is this going to impact the sense of belonging of our staff as well?

And so really have been intentional about creating systems to recognize as a school community that we're a pre-K through 5 school. And so the work that everyone's doing deeply matters. And so I think that just shifting our mindset around the role that everyone's playing has been huge for increasing collaboration between pre-K and kindergarten. So we've really facilitated opportunities for our pre-K teachers to go visit kindergarten classrooms to really understand what are we preparing kids for and our kindergarten teachers to observe pre-K and that creating vertical alignment, I think, has really been supportive of preparing and supporting the youngest students at our school.

Well, it's showing. So way to go. Keep doing what you're doing in that area.

The other thing I was curious about-- you had mentioned the drops in literacy, and I noticed that as too as well. And I thought, yikes, those drops are really-- those gaps are really big, not just for the general population, but also for our multi-language learners. And in a building of 500 kids, half of them being-- a little more than half, actually, being multi-language learners and unable to access literacy proficiency at the ages that are the stages that we would expect them to, that concerned me. I'm curious what do you think is contributing to that?

I do think that there is a series of compounding factors that some of them are maybe a little bit outside of our control. I think that literacy is largely impacted through vocabulary. And within a dual language program, we rely on immersion. And so through COVID, some of our students just were not in a immersive linguistic program and so access to vocabulary in their second language was less available. And for some students, both languages, it was less available.

I think that was a problem that schools everywhere face. But in addition, we had a new literacy curriculum that I think our teachers and staff are really learning and developing familiarity with. And I think with newness, it's hard to have expertise.

But speaking to noticing the gaps as well, as a school, we really noticed that too. And so we shifted our school-wide schedule. So historically, students had participated in an intervention block in one language. And so what we noticed then was students were not really having opportunity to grow in both languages, and we weren't honoring our promise towards biliteracy. So this year, we've created the opportunity for students to get some of that double dosing in both languages.

And we see some early promising results. For the first time that I've been at Hilltop, we're seeing parity in growth between both languages of English and Spanish. And often, in many classrooms, students are having growth-- more accelerated growth in Spanish than in English, which makes us hopeful that we're going to be beginning to see some shifts.

Very insightful and thoughtful plans. Thank you for sharing that. And then, just one more other comment. It's math is on the way up.

I saw that in your slides, and it's really exciting to see. I know the general population of students have gone up meeting math standards and MLL too, not just our general population, multi-language learners also are nearly doubling their-- what is it called? When you're looking at our SBA scores nearly doubling their ability to meet proficiency-- not proficiency-- meeting the standard, I should say.

Anyways, and so what I wanted to say is I saw the point of the cohesive math instruction. And I thought, well, what is this? Could you speak a little bit more to it? I wonder if that has something to do with it.

I do think that this does. And this is something that we are really proud of as a school. So historically in the dual-language program for many, many years, math instruction was exclusively on the English side. So students were not having opportunities to engage in mathematics instruction in Spanish-- for many students, that being their strongest language where they could really maybe more deeply engage with instruction. But not only that, it's significantly reduced the amount of instructional minutes that kids are getting in Spanish.

So what we've done is really shift professional development. So we're supporting our English and Spanish side teachers in math instructions and bringing differs PLC questions to math instruction and thinking about it cross-linguistically. So our English side teachers are really supporting delivering our core instruction for students, using our SFUSD curriculum. And then, our Spanish side teachers really focus on how do we provide students who aren't getting yet or students who are getting it and pushing them forward?

So students are having this opportunity to just get additional practices in both languages. For this reason, we've been able to increase access to students through just languages of instruction, increased minutes in math. And I think that there's also just mindset shifts around when do we do math, that like as a Spanish speaker I can be doing math. And as my staff or as my teacher who's teaching me in Spanish, and so beginning to see themselves in the instruction as well.

Well, something's working if that's it then. Thank you for figuring all that out and getting some things going, because I see some of those increases. And it's really exciting to see. I love that your students participate in all kinds of things. They did the annual poetry slam.

I saw that. That was fabulous. The Hispanic Heritage celebrations-- incredibly fun.

And I'm missing one more. There was one more that I noticed as well. And it's off--

We had a Lunar New Year celebration.

Yes! Oh, because the-- we just passed-- well, we didn't. The state just passed the new legislation-- the new laws around that. And so it was really exciting to see that you guys all already plugged away.

It was led pre-K, K, and first grade students who sang the songs. And so it was really exciting to give over some design to them and their teachers.

Yeah. OK. Thank you. It's very nice to meet you tonight.

Thank you.

All right, Corbin. I have one last question here. And you didn't have this on your slide. But in regards to your PTA, I just reached out to you recently.

And I'm, like, when can I come and visit and just learn about what your PTA does? And you just rattled off so many events that the PTA and the communities. Can you share a little bit more about the involvement with PTA and the community with your school?

Yeah, so I think that this is definitely-- we have a small but very mighty PTA team that I think is just some very dedicated families who are just really wanting to-- have been there far longer than I've been there, who are just really committed to supporting our school and creating opportunities for students. I also think that we just have families who are just really enthusiastic to share in the learning. And so I think when we hear of opportunities for them, and we're bringing them in-- and so we've just been intentional about, how do they share in the learning with us in ways?

So one of the things is, like, we did Family Art Friday so that-- in tandem with Black History Month, so teachers-- our or families got to come in and with their student learn about a contemporary Black American artist. And then, they got to create art that was inspired by this artist too. And so just thinking about we don't want necessarily for you to just-- I mean, you're welcome to just come visit, but you're not just to come visit, that you're a part of the learning and you're a part of our team.

Thank you so much.

Thank you.

I think we're good. Thank you so much for that presentation.

Yeah, appreciate it.

[APPLAUSE]

All right, 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 screen.

Please be mindful that you are here to speak to the board and that there may be students here or watching that are paying attention to your words. In addition, the board will not be able to respond to you directly about your testimony during the meeting. Thank you again for coming and speaking. We have 15 guests here this evening. First up is Izas Indacoechea.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. Good evening, the whole board. Thank you for having me here. I am here as a parent at Gregory Heights Elementary and a teacher at Highline High School. The reason for my concern are the two last gang and drug-related incidents in each school and how it was communicated.

At Gregory Heights, a child threatened to bring a gun to school and kill all their classmates. The note that parents received explaining the incident did neither specify what the child had said nor the discipline and mental health and safety measures that the school was going to take. At Highline High School, we lost our fourth student to gun violence this year. And a week later, a student was found with a loaded gun in school. The staff only received a short note on that.

Furthermore, staff never got any update on what the protocol will be in this case if or when the student will be back and what steps the school and district are going to take for everyone's safety. On the same day, a student overdosed in our parking lot. And yet, we don't know what happened to that student. Are they OK? What happens when students are suspected of being on drugs?

We all need better communication so we know what is happening and there is no room for rumors. We don't need names, but we need facts. We should be receiving as much or more information from leadership than from the newspaper. The district needs to be specific. Not naming the problem won't make it go away.

Also, it is imperative that we educate our students and families about the risk of guns and drugs. We need to educate at every grade level. Now is the time that we need to hear from our leadership about what do you know and share some of the facts around what is going on with our students. We need to be trusted as educators and parents to be given as much information as possible so we can have real conversations with our students about what is going on, what actions are being taken.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.

Takeshi Berry.

Good evening, directors and Superintendent Duran. My name is Takeshi Berry. And I'm an eighth grade student at Highline Big Picture in Burien. I'm here to talk to you about STEM teachers in schools.

You see at the end of last year, our STEM teacher, Dan, retired. And ever since, we have had no professional STEM teacher to teach us the skills we need. Because we lost Dan, all the STEM work fell into our busy teachers who have already lost over 15 hours of time to prepare this school year. I believe that we deserve a STEM teacher.

If we compare schools in our district that have proper STEM programs to our school, the results are staggering. According to the OSPI, at Raisbeck Aviation, a school in our district based on engineering and aviation, 86.6% of students met science standards in the 2022-23 school year. At Big Picture, only 33.8% met science standards. But why am I telling you this? To show that STEM makes a difference.

While STEM education is not taught as widely as math and literacy, it is equally as important. Did you know that according to the US Department of Education in the 2011 to 2012 school year, 19% of schools couldn't fill a job in biology and life sciences? Fast forward to the 2020-21 school year, that number grew to 32%. 32% of schools didn't have a STEM teacher.

But it's not just biology and life sciences. In physical sciences, it went from 26% to 47%. In fact, the Executive Director of UTeach at the University of Texas at Austin said the hope of providing equitable education to all students will remain a hope unless the problem of STEM teacher shortages is solved.

I understand that there is an \$8 million shortfall this year and getting a new STEM teacher for our school is probably out of my hands. But nonetheless, STEM is a highly important subject that all students should be exposed to. Thank you for your time.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you very much. Next up, Lorraine Chachere. I apologize butchering your name there.

Good evening, board of directors, Superintendent Duran, community members, and staff. My name is Lorraine Chachere. And I'm a parent to two children in the Highline School District. I'm here today to implore you to please review and update the district's harassment, intimidation, and bullying policy.

Last week in my child's classroom, a student who has undocumented-- I'm sorry who has documented ongoing harassment, physical aggression toward students in the classroom threatened the life of my child as well as several others and also said he was going to use a gun to kill all the students in the classroom. This happen at the end of February. There are documented occasions with the aggressor since the beginning of the school year. And while I really do appreciate that there are district resources being offered to him to help change the trajectory of the student and have some intervention, I ask that there's also-- that the available resources of the district be made widely known to families in the schools. That would be my number one ask.

Through my research, I learned that there's an ombudsman. There's an actual harassment and bullying and intimidation report form, but it's not on the Gregory Heights website. It's not in our parent handbook. And my ask would be that the school district would please put it-- with all the schools so that parents know what resources are available as required to be in compliance with RCW28.A.300.285.

I'd also ask for support for the educator in the classroom with these ongoing disruptions in the learning environment, the children that witness their classmates being shamed and tormented also suffer. It normalizes the behavior. And so I ask that you please support the students, families, and educators, and staff.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. Chelsea Brassfield.

OK, thank you. Hi. Thank you for having me. I really appreciate the chance to speak.

I'm Chelsea Brassfield. I'm a teacher at Parkside Elementary. And I wanted to take a second to celebrate some of the diversity that we have at our school and in the district.

I want to highlight Parkside, because that's where I'm at, but I know this is happening throughout the district. My favorite thing about our school is how welcoming it is. I think we've really created an environment-- and I tell families when they come that we are going to embrace your student, their classmates are going to embrace them, and we really have a welcoming and safe place.

Over the past four years at our school, the student body has shifted to being over 50% English language learners. We currently have about 130 students from Afghanistan. And our top four languages are Dari, Pashto, Spanish, and Somali. But we have 27 languages spoken at the school, which is so fun as a teacher and creates such a rich environment for me and the students to learn. And it also creates a range of experiences that students get to have.

This has been a really big change for us that we have wanted to embrace and celebrate. So we've really focused on how to support our students and families that are new to the US and our education system. So we've developed newcomer programs for families and students. And these have been really successful. Teachers have learned new strategies, adjusted how they teach, and really made sure that every student feels seen for who they are, feels successful, and feels excited to come to school.

At Parkside, and I know in the district, and I know you all see our diversity as a strength, I know I gained so much from being in the community. And I see that the students gain so much from being around so many different kinds of people. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Next up, Bobbi Giammona.

Good evening. Thank you for letting us come and celebrate things at Parkside. Not that you asked, but we're here. I'm Bobbi Giammona, Principal at Parkside. And I would like to cede my time to Mr. Shawn Samuels, who will speak about a ESSER-funded program that we were able to bring, which is Playworks.

Good evening, esteemed board members. Thank you so much for having me. At Parkside Elementary, we implement Playworks. And they're called Junior Coaches, right? And it is the leading national nonprofit leveraging the power of play to transform children's social and emotional health.

So we are literally changing lives-- our school culture with the power of safe, fun, and healthy play at school every day. We're talking about recess here, guys. We create a place for every kid on the playground to feel included, be active, and build valuable social and emotional skills. The value of recess and play is immeasurable.

We talk about the academic side of it-- abstract thinking, imagination. The emotional side of it-- fun and enjoyment. Social-- cooperation, sharing. Physical-- gross motor development, muscle development.

So we take 18 fourth and fifth graders, we call them junior coaches, and they basically teach games through my playbook for success. And we have leadership mentoring daily to the younger students. They're learning accountability. They're learning reliability. They're learning logistics.

They have to get this every day. And most importantly, they're learning pride. So all the teachers are proud of it. The students are proud of it. The community is proud of it.

And I'm not just saying this. I'm putting my money where my mouth is. I have a daughter in the Highline School District. She goes to Glacier Middle School.

My kids went to Seahurst. So we all as a community should be proud of the things that are going on at Parkside Elementary and Highline Public School District. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you very much. Lesli Meekins.

Hello. And thank you for providing this opportunity. My name is Lesli Meekins. And I'm a fifth grade teacher at Parkside Elementary. I teach specifically English, language arts, and social studies to almost 90 fifth graders. I wanted to address the school board in order to celebrate an important curriculum resource that has benefited my fifth graders.

Highline is my third district that I've worked in. And to me, this has been one of the most invaluable and helpful tools that I've used in the past 10 years of my professional career. We're currently wrapping up our Since Time Immemorial unit in which students are learning about the colonization of North America. This unit was created in collaboration with OSPI's Indian Education Department and our staff here at Highline that specialize in developing multilingual language supports.

The unit that teachers like me are provided with include robust supports that develop essential vocabulary, which is a highly engaging and benefits all learners, especially our multilingual learners who are over 50% of our school population. The curriculum is strong in concept development. And because it was created in collaboration with Indigenous nations, one of its strengths is that it supports students in understanding that historical events must be understood from multiple perspectives. My students are becoming stronger readers and writers. And they are also growing in their ability to think critically about media.

They are learning to critically analyze resources by asking what perspectives are represented and what perspectives are missing. Highline's curriculum team is continuously updating and revising how we implement the Since Time Immemorial curriculum. And this work needs to continue to be supported and celebrated so that our kids can develop stronger understanding of our shared history. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you very much. Manolita Slye.

Good afternoon, Dr. Duran and members of the board. My name is Manolita Slye. I'm an education and language justice advocate serving the Latino community in our region.

I'm here today to talk about chronic absenteeism and its impact on the Latino student community. After the pandemic, school districts across the country lost thousands of students for different reasons, including school refusal. When students keep missing school, we need school systems to support the students by providing trends, impact on grades, and providing support and guidance for parents.

From Highline Public Schools board policy 3122, "It is important for students to attend school every day. Absent or late students miss valuable coursework and instruction and they may fall behind in their education. The district will designate and identify to the juvenile court and to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction a staff member to coordinate district efforts to address excessive absenteeism and truancy including outreach and conferences, coordinating the MOU, establishing protocols and procedures with the court, coordinating trainings, sharing evidence-based and culturally-appropriate promising practices. The district will also identify a person within each school to serve as a contact regarding excessive absenteeism and truancy and assisting in the recruitment of community truancy board members."

I respectfully request leadership work together to ensure this policy is followed and students and families are supported. In complicated cases, families might need to be referred to the community engagement board to discuss if engaging the court system is appropriate or helpful. This has to be done with care and consideration as families do not wish to criminalize their children but to access support for their students. In closing, I want to thank the work done by you, administrators and staff, to offer students in Highline Public Schools the opportunity to succeed. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Nacole DiJulio.

"How about a gun party? I'll bring a gun from home and shoot you. Yeah, yeah, wouldn't that be nice? I'll kill the whole class. Isn't this fun?"

My name is Nacole DiJulio, and that was said to my child and their class at Gregory Heights Elementary School last Tuesday, February 27. I would like to address Highline's Policy 4314-- Notification of Threats of Violence and Harm. You have the policies in place. I am asking that you make sure that each school has these policies in writing. I want flowcharts that teachers, staff, and administrators have access to that provide step-by-step directions for these scenarios that they must follow.

First, the communication itself-- I am asking that you create a template with standardized language that can be used for these scenarios so that communications are easily created and immediately sent to all families and staff at the school. I ask that the communications provide enough context about the nature of the incident so that the staff and families are able to reinforce expectations and appropriate behavior with their students. Part of being an effective parent in partner with the school is working together to keep everyone at that school safe. We all have a duty to these children and the adults to whom we entrust with their care.

An effective communication, outline the who-- a staff member, community member, or student. What-- made a gun threat of violent-- or sorry, a threat of gun violence. Steps being taken-- an investigation is ongoing and the offender will face appropriate disciplinary action. What we should do-- please speak with your students about the importance of school safety reporting threats of harm and violence, as well as the expectations for behavior at school.

Second, the follow-up-- I am asking that these flowcharts also include aftercare for those impacted in the form of social services for the kids, classroom, siblings, and staff who were directly impacted by the incident. This is in alignment with Highline Social and Emotional Learning curriculum.

Third, transparency-- I request that these policies and flowcharts be published on the district and school site making them accessible. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Alex Myric.

I spent a great deal of time volunteering as a coach for children's sports teams. Sports can teach kids how to follow the rules, work together, and deal with disappointment. The discipline and respect involved and the confidence gained in sports can lead to success as an adult. When I coached pre-pubescent athletes, the teams were co-ed. It worked great. Beginning in puberty, boys develop longer larger bones and a higher ratio of muscle mass to body weight.

This is not news. And it is the reason we have had over a half century of separation between boys and girls sports. With transgender activism, this has been corrupted-- first, nationally and now, in our own district. This is allegedly done in the name of inclusivity. Perversely, this inclusivity results in the exclusion of girls from the winner's podium and the record books.

Imagine the feelings of a teenage girl who while experiencing the normal confusion of adolescence finds her niche in a given sport, dedicates herself to extensive training, then excels, but has her honors stolen by a boy who pretends to be a girl. What happens to the respect she has learned for the rules when she experiences them being abused to her detriment? How much increase in self esteem do you think accrues to a biological boy who receives a medal by using his physiological advantages to outperform biological girls? When he is rewarded for gaming the system, what lessons has he learned?

Many girls have recently sustained injuries during their competition with biological boys. Within the last month, three girls were injured in just the first half of their high school basketball game playing against a biological boy over 6 feet tall with facial hair. Ignoring the physical safety of biological girls in favor of the feelings of biological boys is not only unfair and cruel, it is dangerous. I urge you to summon the courage to reverse this warped trend.

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Next up, Tory Walker.

Hello. And thank you for your time. My name is Tory Walker. I'm a fourth grade teacher at Gregory Heights and a parent of two children who will be joining me there soon. I think you may often hear from families that these meetings that are concerned about or maybe even against the implementation of our comprehensive sexual health education that is mandated by the state.

And I'd like to lend my support for these lessons on behalf of students I serve whose voices aren't often represented by families here and to urge the district to choose messaging around our sexual health curriculum that's more clear for schools. We received messaging last Friday that communicated that starting next year the guidance from the district is that we should save our flash lessons for fifth grade only and no longer teach them in fourth grade as we've done for years.

I express concern. And I got a response that we would still be able to choose to do them in fourth grade and repeat them in fifth if we wished. This was certainly not what was communicated and will lead to most schools choosing to do them only in fifth because they believe that's the guidance unless there is further communication.

And I realize for many it probably doesn't seem like a particularly big deal whether you wait a year. But as someone who's taught for seven years, I can speak to the experience of being the first person to tell a group of students that the fact that they are bleeding every month is normal. I have every year at least one or two students-- often many of my students have already started their periods in fourth grade. And there are always at least one or two who are verbally and visibly relieved when they realize there's not something wrong with them.

They're not hurt. They don't have someone in their life. They don't have the information that they have found that outside of school and I am the trusted adult who can provide that information. I think it's really important that we continue to start that information in fourth grade for them in addition to teaching about how to stand up to sexual exploitation and what they should do to reports, teaching students what is normal, and how they can keep themselves safe.

[APPLAUSE]

Stephanie Brusig.

Hello. My name is Stephanie Brusig. And my daughter attends Gregory Heights Elementary. Last week in her classroom, one of her peers said he was going to bring a gun to school and kill everyone in the class.

Since that day, I've had to keep-- I had to keep her home three days because she was afraid to go to school. As a concerned parent, I have the following questions. This child has a history of physical outbursts towards my daughter and others. After this happened that child received support while my child's and her classmates' emotional state hasn't been addressed.

Is there support for children on the receiving end of these types of serious threats? If not, why? The severity of the threat hasn't been taken seriously. These types of threats have been made around the country resulting in a loss of children's lives. With a history of this child's outburst since kindergarten, why is it not been taken seriously?

School leadership didn't communicate this threat to families or staff until after parents of those in the class complained in writing. Even now, many of those parents still only are learning what happened. At times, my child does not feel safe at school and hasn't for a long time. Her education is being directly impacted by this event as well as other behavioral-- thank you.

Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Next up, Deborah Lipp.

Hello, board and everybody here tonight. I'm a school bus driver for Highline School District. And I thought all week, you know, I don't like talking. I know you all think I do, but I don't like this. But I do it because I know I care for the kids. And I also care for the safety of bus drivers, and employees, teachers. We're all not feeling safe. So we're talking about the '24 budget. And just hearing it tonight-- we just had a meeting at ERAC here with our union. We don't feel safe.

They're crossing our paddles. I got cussed out at Pacific by a parent with his 13-year-old son in the car. He was parked in the bus zone. And I go in there at 8:00 in the morning. I have five minutes to go to the restroom. So I always go up there and I park at the end of the fence every day. And there's two cars in the bus zone, so I'm OK. I waited. I didn't honk. I didn't do nothing. The one guy went around.

The second guy got his son and I watched him. And, OK, they're leaving. And they started to pull up. So I pull my bus all the way up where I always do. I parked it, put the brake on. And all of a sudden, he's cussing me up and down. A teacher-- a male teacher comes around. And he looks at me at the door, because the guy is still yelling, and he says I'll walk you in. So he walked me in the school. I didn't feel safe.

And every driver here monitors. We're talking about it today with the union because we're not feeling safe. And I care about kids, but I can't get them to school when I'm not safe. I had Gregory Heights next. Never heard about this incident as an employee, which we never usually hear the things.

And it's OK. It does get around. We do know eventually. But the taxes have gone up. My medical has gone up. The kids test scores have gone down. I'm really worried. I have two kids in the district.

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Joseph Lipp.

Well, since we're going to talk on the budget, I could save you a bunch of money. We should take those electric buses that were delivered to Highline School District. And the only time those wheels have turned on those buses is when they were delivered. They're still trying to put in the charging stations.

Why do we have six buses that cost-- how much-- \$3.5 million? Less? A couple of million dollars, and they're doing nothing. Nothing. Put safety back in the schools. Put an armed person at everything. The parents can get upset. But the parents are going to be upset when this boy (EMOTIONALLY) that should not be in that school-- if I was a parent or an adult and called and said I was going to shoot up a school, where do you think I would be? That boy should not be in that school.

You have 500-- by the end of this year, you'll have more than 500,000 illegal immigrants in this state alone. And those schools that you're building are going to be woefully inadequate and full of people that do not understand the law. And I'm not talking about all of them, but we got terrorists coming across the border. We got people selling drugs coming across the border. We got cartels.

And those cartels have kids. And those kids are learning what their parents are doing. And if we don't start making kids accountable for even running their mouth about a gun, it's not going to change. It's not going to change. You have to take that boy and make him accountable however that works-- and his parents. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Patricia Bailey.

Good evening. On February 21, a special session of the Highline School Board was convened to discuss reform of Highline secondary education based on Transcend Corporation philosophy. The presenters sounded very much like the reformers of the last 25 years-- the demeaning of knowledge-based learning, the demeaning of memorization and recall, the demeaning of standard classroom discipline, and so on. The presenters showed board members a sequence of visuals to impress on them that an entirely new approach to education is needed. They showed a 1900s surgery operating room with a relatively low level of technology of the day, then to the 1950s, then to the 2000s.

Board members were instructed to pick out the differences compared to today. What board members were not asked to look at was the knowledge those doctors had to have? They all needed knowledge and plenty of it-- anatomy, biochemistry, epidemiology, medical ethics, immunology, microbiology, and so on. But before these advanced subjects, they needed foundational skills in reading, writing, math, and science. They needed phonics, math facts, spelling, identifying the main idea, understanding inference, how to write a five-paragraph essay, a rich vocabulary, algebra, and so on, and on, and on.

School board members should not be subjected to this kind of manipulation by administrators. Our elected officials need to be in control of the meetings and, given Highline's low academic performance, hold administrators responsible to be sure all school reforms are academically focused. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Tracey Drum.

Hello. I'm Tracey Drum. And I am a teacher at Big Picture. I'm one of Takeshi and his brother [? Masa's ?] teachers. And super proud that Takeshi came here and spoke like he did.

We're a really unique school, because we make our interests and passions of students the central focus of what they learn. It's a really great alternative to maybe what they've experienced so far in their education. It works great for some, not for all. But it is a really wonderful alternative. And we attract these amazing kids, kids like maybe Takeshi, who could possibly become a Supreme Court Justice someday.

And also kids that-- we have graduates that come and become paraeducators at our school. We just have such an eclectic group. One out of every three has an IEP. And I bring all this up just because we are a really great option. Students really feel like this is their home, this is their family.

And right now, just like Takeshi said, we've lost one STEM teacher. We know that we're going to lose another teacher this coming-- at the end of this year. We're also losing a half FTE of our special ed. And at the same time, we're also increasing our class sizes. I heard just yesterday three per class, which would be about 42 students.

One third of that will be special ed, likely because that seems to be-- in the nine years I've been there, that's always been the ratio. And so we worry if we are going to be able to maintain the type of education that we offer to these kids. So I just urge you to please give that some consideration and please support what we do as an alternative for students. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you very much. That concludes our scheduled communications for this evening. Moving to our superintendent's update. Dr. Duran.

Yes, thank you. I want to just start by just talking about our budget workshop. I just want to thank the directors for the conversations that we had today at the board budget workshops this afternoon. It's been challenging. And we know the need to make budget reductions.

And I just really, again, want to recognize that many of our staff members are being impacted here in the central office. They've really served us in great ways and just really preached for the work they've done. \$8 million is a lot to cut from our district budget. And while the cuts are concentrated in the central office, we know that these positions are going to have some impact at the school level. And so we're definitely making sure that we are sharing the information with our schools and helping them understand what these reductions are going to-- what kind of impact it's going to have.

And also just want to say we are not alone in making these reductions. Many districts in Washington are facing reductions across the board. One of our neighbors just currently announced last week that they are entering binding conditions, which means that now the state office has to intervene to think about how they can support them, which could even go as far as them actually taking out loans to pay some of their bills. So it's a really serious thing that's going on.

We received our budget today from the legislators. So we will be taking a look at those numbers, and we will keep you informed to let you know what we receive from them. Don't expect much. But we know that it's going to be something we're going to have to continue to advocate going into this next year and this next long session with our legislators.

We had our superintendent student leadership team. We went through an exercise with them using the redesign training cards that we used in the secondary school redesign. And it was really fascinating to have our students go through that process to look at those training cards and really hear what stood out from them. Some of the things that were really striking was the issues that we were having in our overall society around gun violence, access to health insurance, the need for mental health.

And one of the things that was really striking for our students is access to factual information from social media. One of the statistics that they read said up to 64% of information that's on social media is considered to be false. So our students really value that time to be able to have the opportunity to get into that. And we spent a lot of time talking around the gun violence. And that was something that has definitely striking many of our students.

And we obviously started thinking around what are some things that we can do to think about how we can provide more information in our community, how we can engage other community leaders to help us with this. Because we always have to look upstream in these situations. Unfortunately, they play out in our schools, but we know these are larger issues in our societies that we need to address.

I had some wonderful school visits this week. And a few of them I just want to highlight is I visited our Deaf and Hard of Hear program at Bow Lake this week with Dr. [? Ryan ?] and our chief academic officer. And I tell you, when we talk about the investments that we make in our students, that is one place that I encourage every one of our board members to go visit because it is a phenomenal experience to see our students, who many of them have different home languages and are learning sign language at home, many of our students do not learn sign language at home.

And so they're learning it in school. And so it was just a really wonderful visit to see that our teachers who are being incredibly innovative have actually found some different curriculum to support our students. And I just really value the work that they're doing in just walking in that classroom and seeing seven different adults, everything from interpreters to the actual classroom teachers who are there to support our students. It's a very valuable program. We really encourage you all to take some time to visit that.

Today, I was able to visit Beverly Park and White Center. And I spent intentional focus on visiting our kindergarten classrooms. And it was just really wonderful to visit Beverly Park and to see our students. They were coming back from recess and just the intentionality that our teachers had in those transitions and talking with students around how recess went, and what they learned, and what they saw, and did students follow the different rules and expectations. And it was really great to hear students talk about the things that they did at a recess and how they solve some issues and conflicts on their own.

Over at White Center, I think what struck me the most was walking through our kindergarten classrooms and walking through a classroom with students learning Vietnamese students and seeing a diverse group of students learning Vietnamese. Students in our Somalian classroom learning Somalian language. And again, seeing diverse students in there.

And, of course, visiting our Spanish dual-language programs. It's pretty amazing offerings that we do. And our commitment to bilingual and biliteracy in our district, for me, it just made me really proud to see those rooms and to see the joy and enthusiasm from our students.

I have one little friend over there who continually challenges me and tells me to look behind me. And the minute I do, he then tells me, you know, gotcha. So I look forward to continuing that game with him. And now, our last thing-- the last thing he did to me as I was walking out of the door was--

Finally, I'd like to introduce our-- Jeb Binns, our Highline Education Association President. He is here to give us an update. So welcome, Jebb, great to have you here this evening.

[APPLAUSE]

Good evening, Directors, Superintendent Duran. Of course, I always go off script a little bit. And so I decided to go off script.

And I asked our friends from Parkside to stick around for a second. And one of the things that I thought was really important today was having some teachers come out and speak about the positive things happening in their school, and then also having their principal come and support them. And so because of that, I would like to publicly present Principal Bobbi Giammona with a Living the Promise pin--

[CHEERS, APPLAUSE]

--for supporting great things, because you said do it publicly.

Do I come up for it? Is this like *The Price Is Right*?

It is.

I would like to then extend that to my team. Because for them to come and speak about what we're doing, it just makes my heart so proud. Thank you. Oh, excellent!

[LAUGHTER]

[LAUGHS]

So make sure to-- at the staff meeting-- public and make it happen.

Thank you.

Public, make it happen.

Right on. Excellent.

Thank you.

That was a better run down the aisle than *The Price is Right*.

See? That was pretty amazing. I loved it. Also, a few bright spots thinking about tonight's meeting to come through there. So one, I had an opportunity-- I heard Tracey talk about Big Picture today.

And I had the opportunity at the beginning of the week to go out to Big Picture and be part of a senior project presentation, which was pretty amazing. And listening to it-- and one of the things that I always thought was unique was their idea of seminars. And in during this presentation, we're going through there, this young man is going through these slides of all of these things that are ridiculously eclectic and super cool. So I'm watching this different types of dancing and different things. And I'm looking at this 17-year-old kid going-- I didn't think that you would be a Filipino sword dancer, but that's amazing.

And I said, where did you learn that? And he goes, oh, I went to a classmate's seminar and they demonstrated this. And I thought it was super cool. So I did a bunch of research and I learned how to do it. And I'm like, yeah, so little shout out for that.

And also, there was some cool furniture design too. So I just some cool things. And also, on a math-science update, you know, here's a Dad brag. Mount Rainier High School graduate Abigail Binns, currently a junior at CU Boulder, pre-med, kicking it with all of the science background that she picked up as a Mount Rainier Rams. So I think that's pretty cool. So we're doing some good stuff.

All right, follow-ups on some things. Two weeks ago when I was here, I was talking to you about synergy data and about Panorama data. Because I'm all about the data these days. So there's some great progress. And I really appreciate it. I brought it to my exec board the concerns I had, and the wants and the desire to do something positive with Panorama data. And we spent some time talking about a plan. And we came together and put together a plan.

And we presented that plan to human resources. And they thought it sounded like a great idea and we're going to go forward. And I'm really looking forward to the ideas of how we're going to implement some data analysis. All the schools are going to go through and identify with their leadership team's a positive aspect of the data that came up and come up with a plan how to make sure it stays positive.

All the schools are also going to look at a little delta, a little something we can do better, and create a plan how to improve that, and then a plan to monitor the plan. Because if you create a plan to improve something and it doesn't work, let's monitor, let's adjust, let's do it right. And I'm really excited about that. Our Panorama team met today-- Michaela Raikes, the program manager, Clint Sallee, principal and head of the Principals Association, Elizabeth Beck, our UniServ Director, and I. And we met and we talked about, how do we go through and help support principals?

Because a lot of times we have these data points and these obscure questions, and they don't necessarily have all of the toolkits and all the tools that they need to make the change. So we were thinking, how can we go through and maybe collect these plans-- especially the ones that work and also the ones that don't work, because that's learning too. And how do we give that and provide that out there for our principals to help them do their jobs better and make their lives a little bit easier?

And also, it will help people who maybe are a little bit reluctant to dig in if they have some tools that are there. So really like to see that. It sounds like some great PLN work that can go through there.

Also on the synergy side, we heard some tough stuff tonight. What do we do around our synergy discipline data reporting that's still there and I still think is an issue? Holly Ferguson and I are creating a road show. Currently, it's the Holly and Jebb Show. And we're going to go out and help support buildings with discipline reporting, what's expected, what's not. This idea that no one has any right to know anything, we need to disabuse ourselves of that.

People need to know not necessarily all of the specifics, but at least this event occurred. This is a thing that happened, that there was a consequence based on that we can feel good about that. Not all of the pieces, but we got to know something other than I can't tell you anything. Because then my answer is, then I guess nothing happened. So we got to work on that one. So I just want to thank Holly for her partnership and look forward to it. And thank you very much. Have a great evening.

Thank you, Jebb. That's it.

Thank you. Moving on to our school board reports, our legislative reports.

The session ends tomorrow. The budget wasn't what we had hoped, unfortunately. But we'll have an overall update once the dust has settled. And that's all I have for legislative reports.

Thank you. Director Petrini.

Sure. I just wanted to note two house bills. One, initiative 2081 that passed on parental rights and school notification.

And that was when I got to go down to Olympia and speak on, which was quite the experience. Also, House Bill 5462 passed-- inclusive learning standards, which was one of the priorities of Highline School District. That's all I have.

Appreciate it. Thanks for the update. Going to move to our director's reports. Director Hagos, I'm going to have go first, please.

All right. So just quickly, kind of circling back to Bingo Night at Parkside, it was a complete hit. It was a standing room only. Such fun. And really-- it was really neat to see the kids with their families be so excited to show them around their little school and their teachers.

And to me, that's more of the deeper meaning behind these family events at the schools. Big sense of belonging for our families, not just our kids. So it was a great night.

OSPI has an open survey requesting thoughts and feedback on the state's High School and Beyond Plan and insight on Portfolio Platforms. I know our district has been doing some really good work around this. And I'm excited to know about that or to have heard about that. I do want to just mention that it is something that is open to families to provide some feedback. These are High School and Beyond Plans that help prepare our students for high school and after high school, depending on what pathway they choose, and gaining some feedback from our families on what are their experiences with Platforms and their understanding around these Portfolios and really providing some insight onto what they would like to see moving forward.

It's a big deal. And that platform is going to close very soon. It is a graduation requirement for students to have this High School and Beyond Plan completed-- well, started in middle school, and then completed by the time they end high school.

And so if your family out there, and you're watching, and you hear this, please do go to OSPI's website, look for that High School and Beyond Plan survey and provide your feedback, as well as our students as well. But I think our district has done a great job with the students. So just to a quick plug for that.

What else? We said farewell to State Senator Keiser, as she steps down from her role. She's done about 28 years serving my district, my legislative district, district 33.

One of her last efforts along with Representative Tina Orwall was in support of advocating and obtaining funding for airport community's noise and air home mitigation efforts. So I really do appreciate her efforts as she is leaving to do something like this and pass the state bill 5955. It's going to definitely support our kids and families who engage in and take on the assistance of these mitigation efforts.

And I did hear you say something about National School Breakfast Week. I got to do something incredibly fun. Thank you, Scott, for sending us a notice about the March Madness event around kind of just going to our schools and serving meals to our kids along with the staff in the kitchen. And so I got the chance to do that at Mount Rainier. It was Tuesday.

And my goodness, the production kitchen does so much. Really getting a chance to hear from our director-- our Nutrition Director Lisa and really welcoming me, and showing me the ropes, and kind of giving me a cover-all on what's all going on. It was a very, very busy kitchen that morning. And I think that we probably served over 200 kids. The purpose of National School Breakfast Week is really to highlight that when kids eat more, they can concentrate.

They can do better in terms of being ready to learn. They retain memory when they're learning in their classrooms. They get to school because they've got to eat, right? So they get to school. They wake up earlier to eat breakfast, and then get to school on time.

So it does serve multiple purposes. And really appreciate the work that they do, the kitchen staff, who fuel our children's bodies and minds with food. So it was really cool to see. There's only one more day left. I'll be able to do it at Pacific Middle School tomorrow. So I'm looking forward to that. I have more, but I think I'll stop there for now. [LAUGHS] More to come next week or the next time I'm here.

Thank you so much. Director Tidholm.

Yes, we are celebrating Education Support Professionals Week on social media. So check out our social media accounts. You'll see our Gold Star Award nominees who are nominated throughout the district. #GoldStarNominee on our Facebook page. My bi-weekly friendly reminder, White Center Heights Resource Center, Thursdays 9:00 AM to 10:00-- I'm sorry, 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM and Fridays 2:15 to 3:15 PM, they have clothing, household supplies, a food bank, which includes fresh fruits and vegetables, also can help you with resumes and things of that nature.

We also heard a lot about the diversity in our district today. And I just want to second that I'm really proud to be involved in the district and have my kids in a district that's really fostering a welcome environment for everybody rather than expecting or encouraging people to assimilate to a country that they've come to, specifically and particularly, a nation that was stolen from Indigenous-- stolen from the Indigenous people, I'm sorry, by immigrants and built on the back of slaves. So to celebrate the diversity in all of our families and our students and the different cultures and the languages, it's really beautiful just to see and to be a part of. And that's all that I have.

Thank you very much. Director Petrini.

Thank you so much. I first wanted to highlight the Gold Star Bash that's coming up on March 27 to celebrate the nominees from Highline that were nominated. You can get tickets through the Foundation website. So that would be exciting to do.

I wanted to highlight that there is next Tuesday an input for instructional materials and curriculum over sexual health. That's March 12th from 4:30 to 5:30 here in the central office. It's an open house to view the curriculum if you want to see it and to have a Q&A on the upcoming comprehensive sex ed education.

Also, on March 25 is a Sexual Health Ed Night. That is 4:30 to 6:30 here in the central office. And that's to go over the flash curriculum for grades 4 through 12. So perhaps, we can get some clarification about what's the moving pieces compared to what we've been doing and to what's coming that needs to be implemented at the end of this year.

So I hope parents will take full advantage of that. Come ask your questions. It will be hopefully a really insightful evening. I also signed up to do the March Madness. I haven't done it yet, though. I'm doing a Marvista next week and Sylvester the week after to help serve lunch. So I'm excited about that and to see the kids and get to bug my kid every now and again. So it's really good.

And I also just wanted to quickly just add my own sentiments to our parents, to our teachers, to our students that are highly affected by things that happen in our school districts. I hope you know that your voices are heard, that many of us do take that home and try to find what we can do to help better serve our community and our students. So I hope that you know that your comments, and your questions, and your concerns are not falling on deaf ears. So thank you so much. That's all I have.

Thank you so much. My report-- a day doesn't go by that students and teachers aren't using technology in learning and teaching. Our digital transformation team has been really upping their game on cyber security. Our staff have been working to reinforce our security measures to keep our students and staff information safe. So thanks for those staff who are proactively working to keep our students safe online and keeping us up and running.

And one last thing-- I just want to thank the district for giving the space to Kym Nelson at her celebration of life this last Saturday. She was well loved by her teammates. She was a volleyball coach, but also staff and friends that were there to celebrate her.

It was amazing to see. Just filled up that auditorium and just-- she's smiling. So that's it for our board reports. I'm going to move to our consent agenda. Can I please have a motion to approve it?

I make a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Can I have a second?

I'll second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Any opposed? I hear none. Thank you. And there was no items removed from the consent agenda. Actions 8.1, 8.3, 8.4 were moved.

That leaves us with 8.2. This is to approve resolution 03-24 authorizing Innovation Heights to apply for the State Board education for a credit waiver. Any comments or questions?

I have a quick comment. I know I asked a lot of questions last time, but I really just want to state as I've been trying to deliberate this waiver and what it creates as possibly inequitable discrepancies for those who are earning a GED who go through the credit system, and then still have that as somewhat of a stereotypical thing that they have to get past.

So sometimes not receiving that equivalent of a diploma for those students might feel unfair. For those students-- but I know as this is a re-engagement program, I definitely want to support our students who have fallen away and we're trying to get them back on track and get them a future that they can look forward to. So I just wanted to put that in there that I think that's something maybe we could have a future conversation about the equivalences of a GED and a diploma and making sure that all students have an access to a fantastic education.

Just a note, I may be mistaken, but I thought when you asked the question, it was clarified that they actually will receive a diploma, not a GED.

So from my understanding is that they will get a mastery transcript, which can be converted to a diploma. Whereas students who go through the GED process, which is usually after graduation, and you can clarify if I'm getting this wrong-- do we offer GEDs still in Highline as well or is this only the pathway that we have now?

Yeah, Holly, do you want to clarify this one? Because this is one where we talked about last week, about our students are earning high school diploma in this program.

[INAUDIBLE]

Thank you. Yes, so Highline does not offer a GED program. Students in our schools that have credit waivers are receiving a Highline Public Schools High School Diploma, the same as in any of our other high schools. So what's different is that they don't earn credits, but they earn a high school diploma, the same as Evergreen and Tyee and all of our other high schools.

There is no GED. This is not an equivalency program. They're just different animals.

Can I ask a clarifying question? So if a student years later goes back to try and earn their high school, what we would call a GED, at least that's where I-- where I come from, that's what it was called-- do we still offer that or is this a re-engagement program part of that? Anyone-- is there an age limit of when someone can be re-engaged long after they would have been eligible to graduate with their class?

So just as with any other high school, you age out the year you turn 21. And these students are getting a high school diploma, so they don't need a GED. A GED is a General Equivalency Diploma. It is akin to a high school diploma, but you take some instruction and you take a test. And if you pass the test at a certain level, you kind of check the box that you've reached a certain level.

We don't offer a GED. I've never worked in an organization that does. So I don't know a lot about it. But a student who graduates from Innovation Heights would have a high school diploma, would not need to go through a GED program, would be just-- again, they show up-- if they're applying for a job and it says, do you have a high school diploma? Yes.

OK, thank you.

Any other--

Thank you. Any other questions?

Thank you so much, Holly.

Absolutely.

Can I please have a motion?

I move that the Highline School Board approve resolution 3-24 authorizing Innovation Heights Academy to apply to the State Board of Education for a credit waiver?

Second, please.

I'll second that.

Roll call.

Director Hagos?

Yay.

Director Tidholm?

Oh, sorry. Yay.

Waiting on you too now.

Thank you. Director Petrini?

Yay.

Director Van?

Yay.

This motion passes four to none.

Thank you. That concludes our action items. We're going to move on to our intro and action item. This is motion to approve the adoption of the board annual goals for the '23-'24 school year. The board started this conversation at the January 20th board retreat, where board members brainstormed potential goals with the star goals name during the discussion as moving forward to come before the board as a vote.

These goals were evaluated-- these goals will be evaluated in June of 2024. There may be a minimal fiscal impact related to the implementation, facilities, rental fees, and cost. I do have a statement from President Alvarez.

"I am sorry I'm not able to be there in person. I want to express my support for the board goals as written in the board action report. These were discussed by directors at the January 24 board retreat. I feel they will help the board move forward in its work within the limited amount of time we have between now and June 2024."

That concludes it. But I would like to open this up for conversation. Directors, any conversations, any input in regards to the ones that are starred?

Sure. OK, so let's see. Looking at-- well, first, I just wanted to say I did appreciate that conversation that we had kind of thinking through some of the things that we would like to do together as a board team. It was new and different for me. And it's good to see us move forward with setting up some board goals, and following through on them, and working together on things that we think are needed for our board team.

So I'm looking at the second one-- reviewing and using the WSSDA board self-assessment and working towards becoming a Board of Distinction. I wanted to recommend and request that we have a WSSDA facilitator help us through this as a board team. I don't know-- this would be the first time I'd be going through the process.

And there are some steps to it that can be done beforehand and some things that can be accomplished at the time of conversation. So I would love to have some support through WSSDA to help us facilitate that part. Yeah, I think that's my main comment.

I do have a recommendation in regards to that. I think that's a great idea. Do you believe that we can get something-- I would recommend that we not have that goal from a June '24 as an end date, but moving maybe to our '24-'25 school year. Maybe not within the next four months, right? But have that be as our next goal. What are your thoughts?

The board self-assessment is meant to be done annually. And we've not had one since I've been on the board. So that portion I would like to see this year. The second part, I think I know where you were getting-- what you were getting at.

So the second part, I believe that-- we can-- because there's two parts to that. Maybe we'll just have to separate that out. But definitely, there WSSDA board self-assessment, I think, is needed.

Thanks for the clarification. I was talking about that second part, in regards to the board of distinction, but I agree with you.

Yes, we can hold off.

Directors, any comments?

I think it's a great idea.

[INAUDIBLE]

I like two of the things that we put together. And that was building systems and understanding to support better communication with each other as board members and our constituents, including timelines, procedures for responding and closing the loop. I think that's really important as we get a lot of emails. Sometimes, it might feel like to some people that maybe they're not getting answered or it's not as in a timely manner, but we're creating systems of who first has that procedure to respond.

But just know that we do read all those emails and we have lots of discussions behind the scenes that happen once in a while between a board member or two at a time. And-- sorry, not like I'm saying we're talking-- [LAUGHS] You know what I'm saying. Anyway.

But the other one, having at least one community engagement by directors' district, and that's something I know that I myself is very excited about. I think, Director Hagos, maybe you guys will speak for yourselves. But being able to have engagement with the community and having some kind of either town hall or community cafe where we get to sit and listen to concerns and have more of a back-and-forth dialogue, which I know we don't really get to have here.

And sometimes, that's probably very frustrating when it feels like you might be talking to a wall of some sort. But just know that we're excited to engage with our community. And that is something that we're hoping to do in the next month or so. So maybe start looking for communications around those events for individual directors. We have it for our different districts. So I'm excited about that piece-- hearing from everyone, and what they have to say, and having that two-way conversation that sometimes feels missing.

I'm glad you brought that up. I am excited about the director-- the community engagement pieces that we'll be doing. I know that I-- I can't say I loved, but I really did-- I can't say love, because I went to all of them. I was exhausted by the time I went to all of the listening sessions that we had-- the community listening sessions that we had last year. But I did.

I was really-- I felt that I had a better sense of what was going on and how our folks were feeling out in our communities. I am out and about all the time, all the time in all five areas of our-- all five cities of our district be it by family, be it by just community events. And so I get to interact with folks. And now, this gives me an opportunity to interact in a different way.

And I've always thought I would love to just have one of those monthly coffee chat with a board director kind of a thing. And so I want to think through some of those other ways that we can do this ongoing besides the one engagement that we have a commitment towards. But right now, yes, I am excited about it.

Thank you very much. And I'm super excited about our goals. And thank you so much, Director Hagos, for bringing up the [? WASD board ?] self-assessment tool. I know that we stopped utilizing an assessment tool around 2017. But bringing it back up and holding us accountable, and we don't have to recreate the wheel. So that's the great part.

The community engagement by director-- by district, I am looking forward to that. I also challenge us to also go to our constituents, to our parents, and our students. One of my goals is to be hitting all of the PTA meetings and having those engagements there.

When I went to our Highline PTA meeting at McMicken Heights, they were like please, Joe, come out, or we'll set some time for you and the directors to speak to our teachers, our staff, as well as the parents that are going to be there. So I also encourage us to do that, just go to them versus them taking the time on another night to come out to us. That ends it for me.

I appreciate that so much when you are looking towards including the PTA. I do have one request. And I don't know if this is the place to say it. But I do want to request that we have space on our agenda for PTA to come. We have our standing labor reports.

We have our standing superintendent director reports. Can we have a standing PTA report time, where whether it's our-- a specific school PTA or PTA council to come out and speak with us and provide some updates. It would be nice to hear that.

Cool. Thank you. Any other comments or questions? All right. Can I please have a motion on this intro and action?

I'll motion to approve the adoption of board annual goals for the 2023-2024 school year.

Can I have a second, please?

I second that.

Roll call.

Director Tidholm?

Yay.

Director Hagos?

Yay.

Director Petrini?

Yes.

Director Van?

Yay.

This motion passes four to none. Thank you very much. And we have one intro item tonight. This is motion to approve the contract with KCDA ATCO Structure and Logistics USA Inc for Transportation Building L. Any questions or comments on that?

All right. There's no questions or comments. And then, any items that you would like to add to our consent agenda? Probably nothing since Director Alvarez is not here. So can I please have a motion to adjourn?

I'll make a motion to adjourn.

I second that.

All in favor?

Yay.

Yay.

Aye.

Aye. Any opposed? None. Thank you. Have a great evening.