

Highline Public Schools | School Board Meeting- October 2, 2024

Thank you.

Well, welcome to our regular school board meeting. Today is Wednesday, October 2, 2024 6:01 PM. We're going to start off with the Pledge of Allegiance. Please stand.

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

Thank you. Roll call, please.

Director Tidholm?

Present.

Director Hagos?

Here.

Director Petrini?

Here

Director Van?

Here.

President Alvarez?

Here.

Thank you. And to the right is our superintendent, Dr. Duran.

Move 21.4, I'm going to ask any directors first if there are any items from the Consent Agenda that they would like to remove? And this is from the Consent Agenda. So this will not require a vote. And the items requested to be removed will be voted on in section 7. Any changes to the Consent Agenda?

So I've got a couple of them. I wanted to move that the meeting notes from 6.1.2 and 6.1.3 be removed from the Consent Agenda for special consideration. So that request was 6.1.2 and 6.1.3, correct?

And for the record, that was Director Hagos making that request.

Yes, Director Hagos making this request.

We don't need a second that, right? Just comes right off.

We don't need a second. Thank you. Are there any other directors that would like to remove any items from the Consent Agenda? Thank you,

Hear and seeing no more, now I'm going to ask if there are any non-Consent Agenda-related changes or additions to the agenda? These changes will require a vote and will be taken one at a time. So any directors, any changes to the non-Consent Agenda?

I have one. I'd like to move 9.1 from our Intro and Action items to an Intro item.

And for record--

Director Petrini. Thank you.

I got to get used to that. Any directors for any other changes or additions? Thank you. So let's vote on the first change requested. This is Director Petrini has requested 9.1 to be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Not from the consent agenda, from intro action.

I apologize. So Director Petrini has requested 9.1 from the intro action to be removed..

To be moved to Intro, to the Intro section.

To be moved to Intro, I apologize. OK Is there a second?

I'll second that. This is director Hagos speaking, that seconded request.

Director Hagos seconded. Adrian, please take the roll call.

Director Van?

Nay.

Director Petrini?

Yea.

Director Tidholm?

Nay.

Director Hagos? Yea.

President Alvarez?

Nay.

I'm sorry. Can you say that again?

Nay

Thank you. The motion does not pass with a vote of 2 to 3.

Can I make a another amendment?

Not at this time for this. But once we move to the actual--

Intro.

Thank you. And moving on forward, so there is no recognitions tonight. We're going to move towards 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 there. Please be mindful that you are here to speak to the board and there may be students here or maybe students here or watching that are paying attention to your words.

In addition, the board will not be able to respond directly to you about your testimony during the meeting. Thanks for coming and speaking. And our timer is going to be over there towards Adriana. So you'll have 2 minutes. First up is Joyce Masick. And if you can, please introduce yourself and then speak. that'd be great.

Yes. Hi, I'm Joyce Masick, the Executive Director of Reading Partners, Seattle. Good evening, members of the Highline School Board of Directors. Thank you for having me and giving me the opportunity to speak.

Today, I want to highlight the powerful 10 year partnership that Reading Partners Seattle and Highline Public Schools has had, last year alone, having enrolled over 115 students in our program. And this year, our goal is to serve at least 120 students through our one-on-one tutoring program, as well as the larger schools that we partner with through school-wide community events like Literacy Nights and Family Nights.

This partnership is absolutely possible because of the learning assistance program, Readiness to Learn Partnerships and the district's commitment to literacy for all students in Highline Public Schools. Highline strategic priorities emphasize the importance of literacy and language development as a key driver of academic and life success. And Reading Partners is fully committed to our partnerships with our three schools this year, our intention to uplift these priorities through individualized tutoring, evidence-based support, aligned with all the academic priorities of the school.

And our model focuses on deep collaboration with the schools, customizing tutoring and our curriculum based in the science of reading. We meet students' unique needs. We amplify resources through dedicated community volunteers who come in and tutor students. And our volunteers not only help students improve their reading skills, but also foster a culture of literacy that extends beyond the school to the larger community.

The impact of our partnerships speaks for itself. Schools partnering with Reading Partners see significant, measurable improvements in students' literacy, proficiency, community members, who show up and are committed to their schools, and positive feedback from the educators and leaders we work with. So together, we're not just enhancing reading skills. We are investing in the future of our community. And I want to thank you for your support of the Readiness to Learn partnerships.

Thank you. Next up, Marisa Patrick.

Hello and good evening. Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight. I'm Marisa Patrick. I'm the program director for Upower. We're a local nonprofit organization, dedicated to providing King County youth with access to physical education through trauma informed practices and healing-centered engagement. Upower has been nominated for a \$10,000 award dedicated to support our work at Choice Academy, an item you'll be voting on October 16. Upower also serves innovation, heights and big picture to provide physical education support to middle and high school students.

Upower has been providing these services to Highline School District since 2015 at no cost and at a significant financial loss for us. We have invested nearly \$350,000 in services and equipment to the district. This \$10,000 award would benefit not only our dedicated coaches, but allow them to support your dedicated teachers and provide in partnership, these vital fitness programs.

Upower's programs help students regulate emotions, develop coping skills, and build healthy habits, key tools for academic and life success, especially post-COVID. We provide intentionally-tailored curriculum for each site with lesson plans aligned with Highline School District standards, developed in partnership with Highline teachers. We see students from all backgrounds and work intentionally at other locations and facilities across the school to prison pipeline, including juvenile detention, Echo Glen Children's Center, Seymour Substance Abuse Rehabilitation centers, and shelters for youth of immigrant and refugee backgrounds.

We have seen Choice Academy students with over 80 days of missed school come to school just to attend fifth period, Upower PE and then graduate. We have seen students transitioning from juvenile detention and Echo Glen Children's Center entering a new school at Innovation Heights, excited to see Upower coaches for gym class and then actively take leadership roles across the school. We have donated over 50,000 items since 2014, such as sport hijabs, equipment, shoes, and more.

Our team of nine individuals has provided nearly half a million fitness minutes and worked with over 5,000 youth. Our collaboration can strengthen student outcomes while addressing systemic inequities, promoting college and career readiness for students.

Thank you so much. Appreciate it. Next up, Annie Sweers.

Good evening. Annie Sweers, the Seattle Program Manager for Girls Inc of the Pacific Northwest. We serve youth, including all those who identify as girls as well as gender expansive youth. As an organization, we're committed to creating pro-girl, pro-LGBTQIA Plus and pro-BIPOC safe spaces, where we focus on the unique support needs of students with marginalized gender and racial identities. Each small group we hold takes place during or after school once a week, October through June, for 60 to 90-minute sessions.

Like Highline's promise, every group we hold, the suit, all of those groups, students are known by name, strength, and need. And we prepare second through eighth graders to enter high school equipped with skills for long term success. Our goal is for students to be strong, smart and bold, meaning strong is our aim that students take charge of their health and possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to sustain healthy lifestyles. Our groups help to facilitate movement-based activities, discussion around positive body image, and share tools to support their mental health.

Smart, we aim that students are academically engaged and connect those academics to life experiences, opportunities and careers. For example, our groups focus on goal setting, engage in confidence building lessons, and create spaces for youth to share their educational aspirations. And bold, we aim that students are socially and emotionally intelligent and receive leadership development that equips them with the knowledge and skills to reach their full potential and support to actively realize it.

We're so grateful for the partnership with the Highline School District over the past few years and believe that a grant with Highline Schools will provide the funding needed to grow our programs enrollment for the current school year. Thank you for considering our proposal and for partnering with us to fulfill the Highline promise to all students.

Thank you. Next up, Murray--

Director Van, may I just ask for a quick moment of pause. Director Alvarez dropped. And so I'm just going to call her back before you call the next speaker. One moment.

[PHONE BUTTONS BEEPING]

President Alvarez, can you hear us?

Yes, I can.

Thank you.

Thank you, Marie Bravo.

Good evening, Marie. Bravo, Latino Civic Alliance Program Director and Resource Development. I am seeking your support in approving the lab funding for community partners. Latino Civic Alliance, our goal is to empower youth by providing comprehensive, culturally-relevant educational experience that goes beyond traditional learning. Our program integrates social-emotional learning, STEM-based activities, career readiness, and life skills development to prepare students for a well-rounded future.

We recognize the strong link between a child's academic success and their emotional well-being and personal development. Therefore, our curriculum is designed to nurture, not only their intellect, but also their emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills. All our instructors are fluent in both Spanish and English. And here's what sets our program apart, culturally-relevant SEL. We establish a safe and supportive environment where students can explore their identity and building strong emotional foundations.

We ensure that students see themselves reflected in their learning process, fostering a sense of belonging and pride. We have STEM-integrated. SEL. Our hands-on STEM activities are intentionally designed to enhance teamwork, problem solving, emotional regulation. Students learn critical thinking through exciting projects, while practicing collaboration, patience and resilience. And we also do career readiness, life skills and personal development, homework help, and academic support. By combining SEL, STEM-based, and career readiness with life skills and academic support, we provide students with the tools they need to navigate life's challenges. Such--

I appreciate it. Thank you. Next up is Annabelle and Maisy Austin.

Hi, my name is Annabelle.

Hi, my name is Maisy.

We are members of Girl Scout Troop 41534.

We are here to support Skunk Works Robotics Team number 1983.

Skunk Works is made up of eighth graders and high schoolers, and they are based in Highline. They take lots of kids, including those who do not have teams at their school.

Each year, skulkers designs, builds, and codes a 120 pound robot from scratch and competes against other teams across the region and the country.

They won lots of awards.

But the best thing is that Skunk Works volunteers help kids who are interested in robotics.

This summer, Skunk Works helped our Girl Scout troop and three others earn our robotics badges.

Skunk Works helped us for free to make sure that girls who like robots can learn to design, build, and code robotics.

And right now, Skunk Works needs your help.

They have been moved to a different building in the Highline School District.

It's wonderful that they have a building to work out of.

However, they do not have the things they need to build a robot and compete.

They don't have keys to the building, so they can't meet late at night.

They don't have access to high voltage power, which they need for their machines to build the robots.

They don't have internet access, which they need for programming.

They don't have enough space for furniture to have a team meeting room or anywhere to eat meals indoors. And they meet at night in winter.

There are many other things that the team might mention, but we only have 2 minutes.

We love Skunk Works so much. We want to join it when we are in eighth grade.

We are now sixth graders, but without these things, the team might not survive. Please help them.

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you so much. Next up, Erin Cranston.

I'm Erin Cranston. My son Cameron has attended Highline Schools since kindergarten and is now a junior at Big Picture. He is also a member of the award winning Skunk Works robotics team 1983, a first robotics program started by an Aviation High School teacher in 2006. They became a community-based program in 2018 when they moved into a space graciously provided by Highline.

My son joined Skunk Works three years ago as a freshman, as we found it challenging to find robust STEM related programs, including any robotics programs within Highline schools. As a member of the design sub-team, he has learned how to design a robot in CAD, how to write an engineering notebook, and how to present that work to competition judges, all from dedicated and industry-experienced mentors who volunteer hundreds of hours of their time for free. Most importantly, he and his teammates have learned how to be a part of a team, how to collaborate with colleagues, and how to win and lose gracefully.

Since our son has been in this program, he has gone from someone unsure about college to a focused, dedicated, college-bound student who logs 300 hours of robotics-based work each season and is planning to study engineering. This is true for many of the students who have been a part of this program for the last 18 years. This focus and dedication would not have happened if he had not joined the Skunk Works.

Skunk Works completely self-funds their program through grants and donations with no monetary support provided by Highline. However, the district continues to provide us with building space, and for this we are very thankful. Unfortunately, usage of and access to the space has recently been scaled back by Highline. So we are here to implore the district to work with the team to find a way to provide the same level of support provided by previous Highline staff and board members.

A relatively small amount of input from the district would enable a huge amount of output in the form of college-bound, STEM-focused Highline students, something the district has been proud of enabling in the past. Continued support could cement this legacy. Without staff and board support, the Skunk Works program cannot continue to provide the same level of supplemental STEM education for this community students, which would be a huge loss for these students and for Highline as a whole.

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Then Ben Folgers.

Good evening, board. And Dr. Duran. Your staff needs you to stop acting as if we are not in another unprecedented situation. Therefore, I'm here to deliver the needs of my colleagues in Mount Rainier as it relates to our unauthorized actor. You will have a list with much of what was discussed, but I'm going to highlight the items that can be implemented immediately.

First, we need time. Educators are still adjusting, struggling to adjust to not having their devices as a resource. We need you to excuse, not reschedule, Job Alike and principal-directed meetings so we can use that time to adjust our practices and materials. This is incredibly important for people like psychologists and SPED teachers who are being told to do this work by hand, resulting in hand-writing reports as long as 40 pages. We would like most of our meetings to be changed to individual or team days and the choice to complete this work off campus.

Second, we need you to prioritize the resources that affect the most impacted staff and students. As of right now, there is no plan for our students in credit recovery, no plan for our computer science classes, and no plan for counselors who are working their butts off to make schedules by hand and send transcripts to colleges and for scholarships. Third, we need to provide more transparent and clear communication. We need parent contact for students by class period so we can address the issues in our class right away, not through our admin. And we need clear communication regarding how we are supposed to communicate grades to students and families.

Finally, I am here to share my profound disappointment in this board due to the meeting on September 4 as a teacher, but more importantly, as a community member. I was so ashamed to see that personal vendettas of two board members against Dr. Duran be put ahead of multiple contracts, which totaled almost \$1.4 million that serve our highest-needs special education students, in the guise of not knowing the procedures.

Despite this egregious failure, we come to you now, asking and believing that in this, once again, unprecedented time, you will get back to the business of prioritizing the well-being of your students and educators.

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thomas DeSilva.

Hey, everyone. My name is Thomas DeSilva. I'm one of the coaches in Skunk Works Robotics, and I work at Microsoft as a software engineer. You heard from some of our students at the last board meeting about the impact that our team has had on them. But I wanted to talk to you a little bit about our legacy of improving access to STEM education. For context, I [INAUDIBLE]. I went to Sunnydale and Shorewood, Sylvester, and then, finally, Aviation. And this was pre Raisbeck. I had a lot of fantastic teachers. But the district program that had the most influence on me was Skunk Works.

Serving our community has always been a tradition at Skunk Works, even before I joined the team. You just heard a minute ago about the workshops that we ran over the summer, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. Our students have mentored FIRST LEGO League teams at Highline Elementary Schools. They've run day camps, Scout Merit Badge Workshops, clinics for other FRC teams-- I could go on.

We've advocated for STEM education at all levels in both public and private spheres, from school boards to the US Department of Education, from local machine shops to Tableau and Boeing. FIRST has an award called the Impact Award-- formerly the Chairman's Award-- that is given to the team at each competition that has the greatest impact on their community. Skunk Works has won this award nine times in 18 years.

Now, you might be wondering, as the board, why haven't you heard more about this program if it does all this? And I'll take the blame for that. We didn't keep any of our students through the COVID quarantine. And we've been so focused on rebuilding these last few years that it just slipped my mind to warn you.

But that said, I would love for you to have a chance to see our students in action. We're planning an off-season competition called Girls Generation at Tahoma High School on the 12th and 13th. It's open to the public, and we would love to see you there. FIRST may be more than just robots, but the robots part is pretty cool. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Next up, MG Christian.

FIRST Robotics Competition, abbreviated as FRC, is an organization which has led to an undeniable impact on the academic success of its participants. Each January 1 announces the rules for that year's game. It changes every year. And teams around the world get to build it. By March, we've built a 100.5-pound robot from scratch and are ready to compete. It's intense, hands on, and super fun. It's also an incredible learning experience with mentorship from industry professionals.

In a study conducted by Brandeis University, it was found that nearly 3/4 of students said that they felt more motivated to do well in school because of FIRST. 89% of FIRST graduates-- more than double the state average-- go on to college. A large majority of participants reported learning important problem-solving skills, and more than 95% said that they had fun and felt like they belonged. These statistics are backed up by countless testimonies from students and graduates that speak to the value of the program. There's a reason so many of the people involved in FIRST as adults are alumni.

Skunk Works provides a unique opportunity to participate in the FIRST robotics program. Most FRC teams are school affiliated, meaning that membership is restricted to students at one school. As a community team, we accept all students. This year, we have people coming from more than 12 different schools. Many come from schools without their own robotics team. I'm one of them. At the end of 2023, the Raisbeck Aviation High School robotics team ceased participation in FRC. If not for Skunk Works, this would have been the end of my time in FIRST Robotics. However, for many students, they wouldn't even get to start.

With the closure of Aviation's FRC program, Skunk Works Robotics and the High-Techers are now the only FIRST Robotics teams in the entirety of the Highline School District. For most of our students, especially those of us in the district, it would be impossible to participate in FRC without Skunk Works here. We are proud to be able to bring the opportunity to take part in FIRST to so many people. It changes lives, and it certainly changed mine. I hope that with your support, you can continue to provide a place for Highline students to experience it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. April Campbell.

Hi. I'm April Campbell, a parent of a Maritime High School student. The number and depth of concerns I have about the education Maritime High School is providing to its students are too vast to cover in two minutes. But I hope what you hear from Maritime families tonight will make you want to learn more, to be curious, and to ask more questions, as is part of your fiduciary duty of care.

Our family has been part of a new and unique school with a project-based curriculum since my student was in kindergarten. And when we enrolled in Maritime two and a half years ago, we were prepared to bring our patience, grace, high risk tolerance, and to embrace the great frontier of a different type of education. The last 13 months have brought stress, confusion, disrespect, and disregard for the students and their families.

As the school has added 11th and 12th grades, it is clear the school is not equipped to handle its mission. There has been a constant push and pull of information. And I still have not had clear information about why my 11th grader is lacking four and a half hours of instruction each week and being sent home because there's been so little communication about the Lead to Learn program.

During the PSATs and SATs administered on campus last year, students who requested 504 and IEP accommodations were not provided them. Whether this was due to the school counselor failing to fill out the appropriate paperwork prior to the test or whether those administering the test were not aware of the accommodations on test day is unclear. 12th graders are trying to apply for college with little guidance from Maritime staff regarding the Mastery Transcript and how to manage it through the college application process.

The district is getting a lot of good press, kudos, and community support for the program, while students are the victims of a lack of organization, support, and appropriate curriculum. The math program alone is a travesty for a school that bills itself as a STEM-focused program. And there is real concern about whether the current curriculum being offered even satisfies the state's basic requirements for graduation.

Private and public entities are putting their money and resources into this program with the promise that it will provide them a new workforce. I cannot imagine they would think this is a good investment of their money.

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Megan Corey.

Good evening, members of the board. My name is Megan Corey, and I'm speaking today on behalf of my robotics team, Spenceworks. We thank you for the chance to address our concerns as we prepare for the competition. Our team is made up of a diverse group of students united by the passion we share for innovation. Robotics has taught us to dream big and face challenges head on. And our goal is not just to build winning robots but to share that with the world.

We host educational clinics for younger students, giving them a hands-on experience to robotics and STEM. These sessions are completely free, which ensures that every child has the chance to explore their potential. And our program is about far more than teaching technical skills. It's about building confidence, resilience, and teamwork skills. It's about showing kids that STEM isn't something distant or out of reach. It's something that they can touch, build, and create with their own hands. And it's about giving all students confidence that they belong in the world of technology.

Today we are asking for your help. Our current building is restricting our potential. We are working in rooms that are just not built to handle the demands of robotics. But with your support, we are confident that we can continue competing and empowering our community. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you, Megan. Next up, Patricia Bailey.

Good evening. I'm Patricia Bailey. The Highline School Board meeting on September 4 was an embarrassment to our city. Instead of using Robert's Rules of Order as a structure to facilitate communication, the rules appear to be used as a weapon to put down and block duly-elected board members from doing their duties. The controversy centered around the evaluation process of the superintendent and a technicality regarding when to modify the consent agenda.

The evaluation of the superintendent is probably one of the most-- if not the most-- important functions of the school board in the education of Highline students. Two board members elected by the people of Highline to represent them believed the evaluation process was incomplete and more conversation was needed in executive session to complete the process.

If only one board member felt the process was incomplete, that would have been ample cause in and of itself to make whatever adaptation the president had to make to accommodate that representative's concerns. But when two board members are maintaining the evaluation process needs more attention, one would expect an inclusive, fair-minded leader would bend over backwards to give these board members voice and peace of mind.

The insults and public belittling of these two board members by the superintendent and president of the board was unprofessional and perplexing to me as a resident of the Highline School District. Frankly, it would make anyone watching this spectacle wonder what was being hidden with these exclusionary maneuvers. Perhaps the president of the board needs additional training in how to include those with whom she may disagree. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. Next up, Honorah Estes.

Hello, Honorah Estes. I am a mother of two children in the Highline system, one at Gregory Heights and one at Maritime High School. And I'm here to say-- probably less articulately than some of the other ladies that are here because I've just got done with a 12-hour shift at Valley Medical Center-- my deep concern for the students in that school, especially my 12th grade son, who is at loose ends.

He is-- lack direction, lack counseling. His math-- he took the SATs and the PSATs, and he did not score well. I know he is a very intelligent person, but he was given very little preparation. The beginning of the first day of school this year was an absolute joke.

The kids had no idea where they were going. They were there for, like, an hour at school. I would ask you to please investigate whether or not the education that our children are receiving at that school is equitable to the educations that are had at any other high school in this district. It's going to be a problem.

And the time my son is going to have to spend recovering his education in college-- in community college or a four-year college or whatever it may be-- is going to cost us time and money and effort that we wouldn't necessarily have had to have at a regular high school. We took a chance at going into this high school, but it doesn't feel like it was a fully realized school.

It was planned out, I think, poorly. We got this idea. We wanted it. Maybe it would be like aviation but for maritime industry. But it's not that. It is just shunting these 11th and 12th graders into Running Start and with no direction. And the classes they're taking are not Maritime related at all in Running Start.

[TIMER BEEPING]

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Next up, Benny Sack.

Hello, Superintendent Duran and school board members. Thank you for letting me speak. My name is Benny Sack, and I'm a mom of two juniors at Maritime High School. Last year, I came to this same podium to speak to this same board about a myriad of concerns at the school, with a lack of communication from administrators to both teachers and families who had and have grave concerns about the direction of education and the new leadership and counseling at the school.

I want to say that while administrators are trying very hard to do a better job at communicating at present, this does not change the fact that 70% of teachers from last year's school staff felt forced to quit and were sometimes outright, anecdotally, being forced out for being a problem. In my view, they were let go for asking tough questions and insisting on answers. The programs being offered at this school are drastically different and more challenging to complete than what was promised to our first freshman class-- and with far fewer choices.

There has been much confusion about the rollout of the new instruction this year across the board. Our inaugural children are now seniors, and many families are deeply worried about not receiving an adequate education and transcripts for graduation to go on to college. Further, some of us suspect that the budgetary constraints are the root cause of these issues, that the school board is drastically reducing services and support to choice schools and are, in essence, quiet quitting on our school.

We are sorry for the situation that Highline finds itself in, but we, the parents of Maritime, insist on high-quality education and opportunities that are being offered to our kids and should have been offered to our kids, as they were promised freshman year, the education that was highlighted in the press as a beacon of education for the district. You need to, at very least, keep the promises to the students, make sure that the proper education and support to graduate and flourish to their chosen maritime fields and to improve communication to both teachers and students and families alike.

[TIMER BEEPING]

Thank you. Samantha Le.

Can you hear me OK? All right. Good evening, Superintendent Dr. Duran, directors of the board, and community members. My name is Samantha Le, and I'm honored to introduce myself as the newly-appointed president and CEO of the Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce, proudly serving the communities of Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park, SeaTac, and Tukwila. I'm also the executive director of the Success Foundation, and I am here tonight to express my deepest gratitude for your ongoing support of our 2024 Workforce Discovery Lab program.

First, I want to thank the Highlines School District for sponsoring transportation for our students to and from local businesses. This support allowed us to bring students directly to various workplaces where they could gain firsthand professional development and career exploration experiences from behind the curtain.

Through this program, we provided 30 students out of 200 applicants the opportunity to host and with opportunities all hosted and taught by local business leaders and community partners. We emphasize low-barrier and high-earning career paths, ensuring that our students are aware of accessible, high-quality opportunities available right here in our community.

In addition, I want to extend my thanks to the Highlines School District for allowing us to use your schools to connect directly with your students. Specifically, I would like to recognize Sativah Jones, Director Van, Director Hagos, Dr. Duran, and the administrative staff at Highline High School. Your commitment to student success, from supporting our outreach to allowing us to hold workshops at your school, has been instrumental in the positive impacts that we've been able to make.

Thanks to your continued partnership, we're helping to prepare these young individuals for successful futures, opening doors to meaningful and well-paying careers that contribute to the growth of our region. Thank you again for your time, your support, and for allowing us to be a part of your students' educational journeys. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

And Kelly Glantz. Last up, Kelly Glantz? All right. And that concludes our public testimony this evening. Thank you, everybody, for coming out and speaking to us. Moving on, the superintendent's update-- Dr. Durant?

Yes. Thank you, Director Van. I want to thank everyone for being here this evening. Thank you for the comments and feedback tonight. I want to start first with some information regarding the cyber incident. So first off, the investigation's still ongoing. Tomorrow, we plan on sending an update on the investigation and a timeline that will share more about how and when we will be getting back online.

So I know the last few weeks have been incredibly difficult, and I want to just thank everyone for the hard work, innovation, and adaptability during this time. I also want to just-- I think it's also important-- when I'm out in schools, I'm seeing our educators doing amazing work right now, trying to do the best they can without technology. I'm seeing some joyful learning in our classrooms-- and, again, just seeing a lot of adaptability and flexibility as we try to meet the needs of our students without technology, without internet, with all the things that we're so used to.

I also want to say that I do know it's taken a toll on our educators, our students, and all of us-- and so really hopeful that we'll be able to get back online soon. So please stay tuned for that information tomorrow. I think it will bring some good news to our community.

Last week had the opportunity to be able to go on some literacy visits with Dr. Reid Bryant at Cedarhurst and Hazel Valley-- today went on a literacy visit over at Chinook And as we all know, literacy is one of our big four priorities this year. And it was really great to get out and to see some of the great work, different ways, again, that our schools are innovating and really thinking about how they can bring literacy skills in the classrooms and apply that in different ways. I'm seeing a lot of books, seeing a lot of writing, see some really great things happening, really grateful for the focus that we have.

I'll also say, I spent some time last week at the Puget Sound Skills Center, which has been one of my favorite places to go because I get some food there. Our first-year students were learning how to make the French omelets, and our second-year students were learning how to make some pizzas with some rustic, homemade tomato sauce. And I was able to sample the chef's omelet. And I know why he is one of our instructors at the Puget Sound Skills Center in the culinary program.

This week, I attended the community partner roundtable. We had a roomful in here with people who serve our students in many different ways. And it was really great to hear the different perspectives that people bring, the different work that people do. They play such a vital role in supporting our students in schools. And I'm really grateful to our family community engagement team for pulling our partners together and just sharing space and giving updates and really thinking about how we can better meet the needs of our students and our families.

At this time, I would like to invite Sarah [INAUDIBLE], who is an eighth-grade student from Highline Virtual Academy, to the podium. Sarah, come on out.

[APPLAUSE]

Mr. Calvin, you are welcome to come join her if you want to for some support. All right.

You got this.

Welcome, Sarah.

Hi. My name is Sarah. And I'm an eighth grader, like you said, at Highline Virtual Academy. And I'm here to thank you, the school board, for giving us a location. As you probably know, our last location at Southern Heights got burned down a few months ago. And you were able to find us a new location really quickly.

Personally, I think it's a great place. It meets the students' needs, and it has a really large field, which is perfect for activities such as field day and other in-person things, and a really large stadium or stage 2 for the eighth-grade promotion, which I'm really excited about. And it's all thanks to the school board. So I just wanted to thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you, Sarah, for coming out and sharing those words tonight. All right. And now I'd like to welcome Jeb Binns, the president of the Highline Education Association, to the podium to share a few remarks. Welcome, Jeb.

Thank you very much. Well done. Fabulous. I'll do my best to keep up with your-- Thanks a lot. It's a four-pager, so watch out for me tonight. So my name is Jeb Binns. I'm the proud president of the Highline Education Association. And nice to see you all again. It's been a minute.

It's been a hard 26 days. Our educators had to reimagine education twice in five years. They're tired. They're stressed. They're teaching their butts off. On my site visits, I have seen amazing teaching and amazing learning. And they need time. And we need some joy.

A couple of newsletters ago, I included a little Easter egg in it, where if anybody happened to click the one magic word, which happened to be "perfect," they could get to a survey, include their name and their work site and their favorite school-appropriate beverage. Over the last week and a half, I've gone out to do surprise site visits and brought their prize for a little picture and brought them a little bit of joy.

Those little moments are the things that are helping folks get on. And it's something that's helping me deal with the volume of emails and things that are happening through there. So I think those little pieces of joy are amazing.

I want to thank some folks. I want to thank our educators for their work, their innovation, their collaboration, the learning, and their teaching. I want to thank our employee compensation specialists. Without their work, making sure people are spot on the payscale, where they're supposed to be for their clock hours, getting all that stuff down, we would not have been able to pull off the amazing feat that our payroll department pulled off last Friday, getting that done. And that was amazing. And if all my HSD people could give some snaps for employee compensation and payroll, I'd appreciate it.

[FINGERS SNAPPING]

That was lame, but you'll work on it then.

[LAUGHTER]

Maybe you'll figured out for this group. Our Digital Transformation and Innovation team has worked tirelessly. And I don't know if it's-- I was talking with Dr. Gabriella. Maybe tirelessly is the wrong word. They're tired. So they are working to the point of tired and then continuing and pushing on. And without them, we would not be as far along on this process as we are right now. So I want to thank Tyshawn and his team for great work. And I was over there thanking them today.

I also want to thank our central office specialists who have been working to create the curriculum that folks are getting pushed out to schools because they don't have access to the lessons that they've designed and planned that are housed. So I just want to make sure that we just lift those people up and think about them for the work that they've done. And the association appreciates them dearly.

Last week was NEA Superweek. I'm the senior director representing Washington State and the largest labor union of the United States, the National Education Association. We spent time lobbying on Capitol Hill on the Social Security Fairness Act, full funding for schools, including Title and IDEA and including all of our work for lab.

We also lobbied on Ethan's Law for safe gun storage. And we secured a quarter million dollars to fight off the insipid Initiative 2109, which would gut education funding in order to benefit billionaires. At that meeting-- let me see, after that one. At our meeting, we presented a banner to the NEA's Merwin Scott and Michael Scott of the Racial, Social, and Economic Justice Center. And Dr. Duran, we would like to present you one as well.

We want to thank you for your commitment to equity and to our students and educators in the Highline School District. We hope that you find a fun place and a proud place to hang this banner. We thank you and behalf of our [INAUDIBLE] team and our core team and kid team across the room. We appreciate it.

And finally, our union siblings from across the region joined my favorite book meeting at the Burien Library last week when my vice president and I were unable to attend. They said that it was great to see our students of all identities and intersectionalities show up, be heard, and share their favorite book. So thank you for providing that opportunity for them. And with that, I conclude my report. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you, Jeb. And thank you for the poster. If anybody didn't see the poster, it says, "We are future ready," which is very appropriate for the work we're doing here in Highline. Thank you.

And he's going to hang it right over his bed or something like that.

I don't know about that.

[LAUGHTER]

Thank you. That concludes my update.

Thank you very much. Moving on to our school board reports, any legislative reports you'd like to report out on?

I do, talking about-- myself and Director Tidholm last week attended the Washington State School Board Directors' Association for our legislative general assembly to vote on board priorities for the Highline District, representing one of 120 other school districts that also participated, which is, I think, the highest participation they've had in a long time.

And on top of that, what was amazing is it was supposed to be a two-day assembly that could take all day. And somehow, we finished in one day with an hour to spare, which was pretty awesome. It went pretty slick, lots of agenda items that got nearly 100% unanimous consent on a lot of things that I think everyone believes in.

And so I'm excited for a lot of the things that were passed that we are asking our association to advocate for on behalf of school board directors, which is one of the things we'll be talking about today in voting on our own legislative priorities as a board that we will also send back [INAUDIBLE] that we would like them to advocate for. So that is all I have for legislative report.

And for the record, that was Director Petrini report--

Sorry, I forgot.

Thank you, Director Tidholm, any other comments on that? All right. Thank you so much. We're going to move to our director's reports. President Alvarez, you're going to be last, so be prepared. I'm going to start with Director Tidholm. Any reports?

Yes. So last month, Governor Jay Inslee came out to visit our McMicken Heights Elementary School. Dr. Duran and I got to attend the visit as well, and we sat in on two of our inclusive classes. The model looks like-- students with special needs are supported by special education teachers and peer educators within the general education classrooms as opposed to being in separate classrooms.

And the research shows that inclusive classrooms benefit all students, promoting academic growth and social interaction for students of all abilities. And currently, 11 out of our 17 elementary schools in our district have adopted this inclusive education approach, with three more schools starting this year, which is really exciting. And the remaining three schools are set to join next year that same model.

And Governor Inslee said at the end of the visit, which was really great to hear, that it's encouraging to see the individualized support students are getting from the team of amazing general and special education teachers. And it really was beautiful, seeing the babies being able to be in the same classroom and not separated. I'm not a huge fan myself of the separation-- just having them included for, not only the students that are in the general education, being in the same classroom with them and seeing that it's OK to be a little bit different.

I have a kid with an IEP and a kid with a 504, and I think it's really important that we have this inclusive model so that the kids can learn acceptance and what is normal. Like, who gets to define the confines of normal, right? Other thing that I have-- of course, White Center Heights Elementary School has their Family Resource Center Thursdays 9:00 to 10:30 AM and Fridays 2:15 to 3:45 PM, where they do have a food bank with fresh fruits and vegetables, a clothing bank, resume assistance. They have household items and goods. Please do utilize it. It's open to anybody in the district.

And I do also want to acknowledge the things that I heard today just regarding Maritime. My niece goes to Maritime High School, and she's told me nothing but great things about it. So I'm really sad to hear that everybody's not having that same experience. And yeah, I'm really interested to learn more about what's going on and what the other experiences look like. Because, obviously, I'm happy that my niece is having a great experience, but I want all of our babies to have a good, inclusive, and equitable education. We don't want babies having to catch up once they get to college or even throughout high school, right?

And yeah, also got to visit transportation with Vice President Van as well as Superintendent Duran and thank them. I know that everybody's been working incredibly hard. Some of them are out there until 11:00 o'clock at night just doing things, just pen to paper. And also with the cyber incident that we've had, I definitely feel-- my heart goes out to our educators, very unfortunate, so incredibly grateful. Because I asked my kids-- I have kids and nieces across four different schools in our district-- like, how's it going? And they're like, it's fine. It's whatever. We still got to learn. So I know that the educators are definitely working very hard.

But on the other hand, a lot of the feedback that I've gotten from my babies as well as a lot of the neighborhood kids-- is that they actually like having to do things on paper with a pen and a pencil. And I was shocked to hear that. Because the question they always have is like, how did you guys survive before technology? Like we're some kind of old boomers. Like, however was it possible? And that's what they're doing now. And as much as they talk about us, they actually enjoy it. So it really makes me question, could we maybe find a happy medium between having the technology, which is obviously great support for the educators, but also making these babies still put pencil to paper sometimes? Yeah, and that's all that I have.

Thank you very much. Director Hagos?

OK. So I think I'm going to start with ParentSquare. So parents and secondary students can still access ParentSquare and StudentSquare. If parents and students have not activated their accounts, we do encourage them to download the mobile app and subscribe to text messages notifications in their account settings. ParentSquare and StudentSquare are how staff send district, school, and classroom messages to families.

And we can use email for that, text, or app notification. The apps do allow communication in your preferred language, so that is incredibly helpful. And then visit our website to learn more about it. And download the app today if you have not downloaded the ParentSquare by now.

And a couple of other things I'd like to share-- so today actually is national custodian day. And I know that we are grateful for the hard work and dedication of our custodians who keep our schools clean, safe, and welcoming to everyone. Their often unassuming nature, but yet, never unnoticed contributions touch the daily lives of our students, truly bringing a sense of normalcy and comfort to our schools. In nearly every school building that I've experienced, there has been a beloved custodian whose presence and care creates a welcoming environment while also quietly sharing their lives with staff and students alike.

Just this weekend, after our retreat, I got to meet the custodian, Carlos, who was here that day. He is one of our own beloved custodians right here at this district office. And he took the time to say hello and ask about my day. I had stuck around to do some work, and then I asked him about himself, about him, and just wanting to learn a little bit about his story.

And I had learned he has spent, I believe-- yeah, I may have to be corrected, but I think it's over 20 years in this district in Highline community. But specifically, he talked about eight years at Pacific Grove School. And he shared how overjoyed he was about the building construction and believes the students and communities are well deserving of this change.

He also talked about his deep-- I mean, when he was sharing some of the things that he had shared with me, it truly was deep care about the lives of our students, their stories. And he explained how he provided words of encouragement for academic persistence, for social and emotional growth through any of their challenges. He would take the time-- if a student looked happy, he'd ask them why they're happy and what's going on in their day. He wanted to know about it. If his students were looking not so happy, he also wanted to know about it.

He cares about the whole child in every student he meets. And we both walked away knowing each other's name, strength, and need in that moment. It was an unexpected chat on a very quiet weekend afternoon, and that is the power of our dedicated custodians. And for that, along with many other reasons that I learned about Carlos-- he is not here tonight, but I'm going to have to find him and make sure he gets this in person. But I do want to present him with a Highline promise pin. It was a very special moment.

[APPLAUSE]

One quick thing I wanted to say about him is, at the end of that conversation, he said, you know, maybe one day, someone's going to know my story. And I hope that this acknowledgment is a step in that direction for him. And I cannot wait to see him to present this pin to him. So that's the first thing that I wanted to make sure I brought up. It was a very truly special moment.

The other part-- [COUGHS] sorry, there are cooties going through the building, so I've got a little bit of a cough. You may hear a little rasp in my voice. It's been four weeks, though, so it's not a new cough. Don't worry about that part. OK. So in honor of Celebrate the Bilingual Child Month, I'd like to take a second to greet you all to the meeting in Tigrinya, which is my native African dialect.

So [SPEAKING TIGRINYA]

And what that means is, hello, everyone. How are you all doing tonight? I'm glad to see you all here and well. And with your respect, I ask, let's continue our meeting tonight together. Thank you. I am so very honored to get to live in communities like ours, rich in language and culture, and hope our students and schools know how much we value all they bring to our schools. So happy Celebrate Bilingual Child's Month.

OK, a couple of other updates-- I know these updates are long. But, you guys, there is so much always going on. So I do want to share a few more things. I got to spend some time out and about with family and friends at City of SeaTac and City of Burien. It was Welcoming Week, I think. I can't remember the exact days, but the event that I went to was September 14. And Welcoming Weeks in the cities of SeaTac and Burien answered the call to foster belonging locally and created a connection among all community members, particularly youth teams and families.

So I think that these celebrations align directly with Highline Public Schools' strategic focus on creating inclusive environments where every student and family feels valued and supported. So Welcoming Week helps to reinforce that this part of our strategic plan directly matches the experiences and needs of our school communities. That day, we witnessed some incredibly beautiful performances by our very own students. I got to see students perform from Mount Rainier, from Evergreen High, from Sylvester, from Gregory Heights, and so, so many more.

I teased some of the city officials and some of the elected officials that we'll have to start rating the city events that I attend because they were asking me which city holds the best events. And so I told them I'll have to come up with a little rating scale. But obviously, I won't do that. But I am very grateful to their efforts in supporting the well-being directly related to the needs of our youth and families. OK, one last one, and I think I can hold off a couple more for another time.

But I have attended the annual mayor's state of region address, where I had the privilege to hear from and learn about the updates from mayors of SeaTac, Des Moines, Burien, and deputy mayor of Normandy Park. Attending the mayor's reception that day allowed me to stay-- I don't think I see Samantha Le here. It was a part of the South Side Chamber of Commerce. So that day allowed me to stay informed about regional priorities and developments that may impact schools and students and also fosters a sense of identifying shared goals impacting youth development. It appears that each city is in the process of updating their comprehensive plans.

And I swear, I feel like I've seen another link for a comprehensive plan somewhere every other week. But they are doing that. And I appreciate hearing about the impact of our youth and families. But I share this to say, please consider providing your own-- feedback, school staff, students-- if you happen to live in these cities to support the efforts of our youth well-being. They are going on now. Some may have closed. But I have heard, if they hear from us, they will take our feedback.

I also attended the Sylvester turf ribbon-cutting event. I did miss the beginning due to a work conflict, but it was wonderful being in community with our students. And I did visit-- I think it was the Museum of Flight during the Highline School closure days and I just-- again, to be in presence with their students. And I actually found educators there too, chatting with our students and our families.

So thank you to the many community folks for finding ways to support our schools and students during the challenging time. And thank you, thank you to everyone who is pulling together and getting through this very difficult time as we work through some pieces here as a board team tonight. Thank you.

Thank you, Director Hagos. Director Petrini?

Thank you. I want to share the same sentiments of Director Tidholm and Director Hagos for our teachers, our students, our admin. I can't imagine-- trying to work off just my tiny phone has not been the easiest. But I know running a class and a whole district must be an entirely different feat. I first want to share about my community engagement that I was able to hold at the Burien Library this last week called My Favorite Book Share and Exchange.

We had an amazing turnout-- in fact, probably double what I had expected, even myself. We had over 70, 75 attendants. 30 of those were children, and we had them in the center and read a book with them and gave them each the platform to share about their favorite books and what they're reading and why they love it. And we had a couple of kids after a while who just got so excited, they wanted to get up again and again, which I thought was awesome.

And then we opened it up to our middle and high schoolers and our adults, who are not so little anymore, but to talk about their favorite books and what has inspired them in their life, what books have challenged their thinking and pushed them beyond, which I think is the whole purpose of reading and educating ourselves-- and putting ourselves in different situations in our imaginations to understand each other better. So I loved all the different books that were shared. In fact, there was people that even exchanged some of their books. And I love that.

And I got amazing feedback, probably about five different families who said, when are we doing this again? So I've been asked, let's do this again. I had hoped to do other community-type engagements, but I think this might become a staple. So look to that in the future. So yeah, I really enjoyed that.

I know last school board meeting, we weren't able to really have a director's report, so just maybe some of this stuff is old. We've talked about the soccer field with the Sounders that helped raise that money by their fans. And I was able to attend also that ribbon cutting. My son, who goes to Sylvester, was very excited about that. In fact, he tried out for the soccer team. I think they had over 70 kids this time, which was the most they've had try out for the teams. So all the kids are pretty excited and using that field every day.

I also was able to tour with our superintendent, Dr. Duran, a few weeks ago, the Beverly Park location for Highline Virtual and Innovation Heights and to see how quickly our teams have been able to put that spot together for our students in time for school. It was probably amazing. And, of course, we recognize that that displaced our robotics teams. And so they were moved over to the Salmon Creek spot. So Dr. Duran also took me over there to take a look at that and see where they're at.

And I definitely would hope that we can encourage any kind of concessions that our district can make to meet the needs of our kids, our programs that have been supported by our community for the last 20 years. We'd hate to see these kind of programs die. So anything that we can do to continue to support them, to remove any hurdles that might be in their way so that they can do what they're supposed to do, build and innovate and invent and win on behalf of our community. So I just implore our district to take those concerns into consideration deeply.

I also want to share my own concerns in listening to parents from Maritime. Just know that you're heard, and conversations are happening. And so I'd also like to maybe encourage some kind of parent or teacher, community type of meetings, where parents can have an opportunity to ask their questions, maybe in some kind of open forum. I'd love to be a part of that. But I think having that transparency, that option for communication and to get those answers quickly-- maybe in one meeting-- I think would be really valuable to a lot of people. So I'd like to encourage that meeting to happen.

And lastly, we had our own board retreat this past weekend, which I felt was very fruitful, a lot of great conversations happening. And in talking about how we can govern better-- of course, when we have breakdowns coming down to learning different rules and things like that and seeing that we also can do better in knowing our own rules. So even according to our own policies, it seems like we weren't following all of them exactly, which is where some of that breakdown came.

But just know that those items that were on the consent agenda were very important to me. Having two special-needs children myself was not easy, so I wanted to make sure those things got passed. So I'm glad that we were able to get our business done and continue on and do the business of the board. That is all I have for today. So, sorry.

Thank you so much. Director Alvarez?

Thank you, everyone. This is Director Alvarez. I just wanted to talk a little bit about Burien Trot that's happening coming up this weekend. Please join us. It is our 2024 Burien trot on Saturday, starts at Burien Town Square Park. It's a register-- it's a 5 fun run and walk. So that's a big emphasis on the walk but also run--

[LAUGHTER]

--and for the 1K fun run for kids So last year-- thank you to the superintendent-- got my grandson involved, and he ran. And he was really, really excited about that. You can even form a Brat Trot team with family, friends, and coworkers. And just a reminder that all proceeds support the Highline Schools Foundation, which in turn supports our students and families and teachers.

And this was a huge support, even during the pandemic, when Highline Foundation was at the frontline, really supporting our families. So thank you always to Highline Foundation. And to learn more, please visit the foundation's website. And just a big thank you-- and also to let the teachers know that we see them, we hear them, and very much appreciated.

And even thank you, Director Hagos, for bringing Carlos and all our custodians in to be mentioned. I also had an opportunity to connect with Carlos during Saturday, and just to hear his story is amazing. And we're so thankful for him as well-- but all the custodians because they're such an integral part to our system as well. And that concludes my report. Thank you, Vice President Van,

Thank you so much. And I'll conclude it with my director's report. I just want to piggyback on Carlos's story. I met him 14 years ago at McMicken Heights. He took care of my kids, took care of all the students there. One of the programs we started there was WATCH DOGS, Dads of Great Students, where we brought a lot of father, and father figures into their classroom and hallways and things like that. And he goes, Joe, I'm an employee. Can I be part of that? I'm like, the more, the merrier. So he was able to hang out with us that night, take care of the kids.

So when you were talking about Carlos-- and I saw him for the first time in, I think, five or six years-- and just all of the memories came back of the kids running up to Carlos, Carlos this, Carlos that. At that point in time, there was only, I believe, three male teachers in the school. So they were attracted to him and all the fathers that came in.

When you talk about our custodians, our librarians are just people that take care of our kids, know them by name, strength, and need, it's true. I also want to share that with our bus drivers when we went and saw them few weeks ago. A lot of our students see them for the first time of the day and also the last when they leave that school bus. So they are impacted by all of our support staff. And I'm just very, very proud about that. So thank you so much for sharing the story about Carlos. Because those little things, that makes a huge difference.

If you guys don't know, I'm going to share a little bit of history tonight. We have a huge birthday coming up, huge birthday. If you don't know, Highline High School 100 years ago opened its doors for the first time. So 100 years ago, the first 14 classrooms were built in 1924. The first class to graduate from Highline High School in 1925 only had nine graduating seniors. That's a lot-- not really.

[LAUGHTER]

Between 1924 and 1941, the high school was opened up by the Union R High School District 41. This Union R District joined with the separate elementary schools districts as Highline School District in 1941. So as you know, we have our new building that was opened in fall of 2021. So I just want to wish Highline High School a happy 100 years. And that concludes my director's reports.

And for the record, that was Director Van.

What was that?

For the record, that was Vice President Van giving his report.

Yeah, that was me.

[LAUGHTER]

All right. We're going to move on to our consent agenda. Item 6.1.2 and 6.1.3 were removed from the consent agenda earlier in the meeting. Now we're going to vote on the remaining items listed under the consent agenda. Can I please have a motion?

I'll motion that we approve the consent agenda.

I'll second that.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye. Any opposed? Thank you, Anna. Thank you very much.

And for the record, our consent agenda has been approved. Thank you.

Thank you. OK. Now we're going to talk about the two items that were removed from the consent agenda. We will take each removed item one at a time. So, Director Hagos, since you recommended 6.1.2 to be removed from the consent agenda, what are the concerns in regards to those minutes?

I'm looking to have the minutes amended. I have a couple of things I'd like to say about that.

OK.

All right. OK. So in the meeting notes in 6.1.2 for September 4, it states that Director Hagos made a request to remove the special meeting minutes from the consent agenda for a special consideration. There was discussion on whether this was an appropriate time within the agenda to make this request. Directors were informed that the proper time to make request changes to the meeting agenda was during item 1.4.

And so, usually, I come prepared and make sure that I have some information and some background before I come to these meetings. And in policy 1420, it states that any item which appears on the consent agenda may be removed from the consent agenda by a member of the board and the remaining items will be voted on by a single motion. So one of the things that is consistently mentioned is that because I had brought it up in a certain time, then that was one of the reasons why all the other items had failed or something like that.

Well, it's very clear that did not need to happen. The remaining items could just be simply voted on by a single motion. And if you look at procedure 1420, it lists that the consent agenda has item 6 and then item 7. So this is after the consent agenda is opened. It lists items removed from the consent agenda. So I also checked out Robert's Rules of Orders before having this conversation. And the consent agenda can be altered with a motion once it's opened to the floor.

So all of these pieces of information to me states that I did do it in appropriate time. And I made sure that I followed the pieces that are needed to move and amend minutes. So my request is-- I moved to amend the minutes to correct the statement on paragraph one after consent agenda 6.11 to reflect the discussion that happened. The discussion in question-- I'm going to go back a little bit.

So it was stated that there was a discussion on whether this was an appropriate time within the agenda to make this request. That discussion was between Dr. Duran and President Alvarez, stating that I made a motion at the wrong time. I'd like to have that updated to include I did not. In fact, based off of Robert's Rules and Orders and our policy, I used a correct time. So that is my request and my motion on the floor. I'd like to have that amended to reflect appropriately that I've done my job.

So, Director Hagos, is it the minutes or is it the process that-- so the request is any minutes. So are the minutes incorrect as far as the statement, or is it the process that you're challenging?

I'm challenging the minutes. It says there was a discussion and the directors were informed. So I'd like to add in that we do have policy language in Robert's Rules of Order language that I've made an appropriate motion. I'd like to have the minutes amended to include I've done my job by our policy and Robert's Rules of Orders. I'd like that corrected.

OK. Any other comments or questions in regards to that?

I'll first second that amendment as well, being that, through Robert's Rules, it does say-- even though we have, in the call to order 1.4, calls for changes and additions at that time-- like she stated, that through Robert's Rules it says, when you get to the consent agenda, that is actually another time you can do it, even though we don't have it listed. Perhaps, maybe, what I thought was that we should move the call to changes right before we start our business of the consent agenda, just to eliminate any future confusion as well.

OK. I just want to clarify--

So those are two different things. But I'm first going to second what she said.

So I do want to clarify that this is in regards to the minutes. And I did watch the video over and over again. And just to clarify that question, right? And what was dictated is correctly stated, what was said. So we're not challenging what was said. I think what you're challenging is the process in which it was done.

However we can get this done, I'd like to make sure the minutes reflect the correct way that I have done my job. I want to make sure it's noted in the meetings. So however we can get this done, that is my motion. And if someone has a suggestion of how I can change that motion, I'm happy to do so. But I would love to have it added in, per policy and per Robert's Rules of Orders, I have done my job for my duty.

OK. I do have a process question. I would love to ask Holly or Aaron to come up. So the request is for-- this was in regards to the minutes but, based on what Director Hagos is stating, that the minutes did not reflect what she meant to say. Because you meant that-- let me rephrase that.

Might I-- I think that, as Director Van noted, the minutes are accurate. The process-- I'm not disputing what Director Hagos is saying. But I question if maybe you stating it now on the record is sufficient. It will go into the minutes for this meeting. Because I don't think it's feasible or appropriate to amend the minutes for that meeting, as the minutes are accurate. And we can't go in and change the minutes because that's what happened at the meeting, right? Whether it was right or wrong, that's what happened.

OK, I get-- oh, sorry my microphone was off. I get what you're saying. And if it's an addition to-- however these meeting minutes can be amended and add an addition to, I'd like it to reflect on the September 4 meeting. I don't want people to have to dig to find what I did was correct. I'd like it to be reflected on the September 4 meeting. So a motion to add in that I've done my job right-- so however we can get that done, I'm happy to do it.

Thank you so much, Director Tidholm. Thanks for clarifying. That's what I was thinking, and you said it. But based off of that, could we have the statement right now from Director Hagos into record about September the 4th meeting to reflect as such?

This is Holly Ferguson, chief policy and strategy officer. I do not believe that minutes can go back and be changed to reflect something that did not happen at the meeting. At the meeting, Director Hagos-- all directors, excuse me-- were informed that district practice is to pull items off for any part of the agenda during item 1.4.

I did have a chance to go back and look at prior meeting minutes from prior meetings wherein items that were on the consent agenda were pulled off during 1.4. I just don't think you can go back in and say that at this meeting, something happened that did not happen at that meeting.

So help me through this then. So in terms of where it says "directors were informed that the proper time to request changes to the meeting agenda was during item 1.4," I did have a proper time to do that. So how do I adjust that to say that that's wrong? It's wrong.

And again, we are guided by Robert's Rules. We do not follow Robert's Rules to the tee, as stated in our other policies. How do you go-- you can't go back and change-- I wish I'd gotten this question in advance. I would have liked to have a chance to do some research.

In today's meeting, you would request that the minutes from today's meeting reflect your belief that what you did on September 4 was correct. But you can't go back and change the September 4 minutes. Because anyone looking at the September 4 meeting would say, no, that's not how that happened. So that's the problem.

What do you suggest?

I think, based on what you just stated here, it is for the record, though, as far as you saying, you know what, on the September 4-- and you shared with us you followed the correct process.

I would agree with Vice President Van on that. I think you would say today, for item 6.1.2, you are requesting that today's minutes reflect-- and you've already said it, so reflect what you've already said.

OK, just one other thing-- you said it's what I believed is correct. Again, it's stated in policy and in Robert's Rules of Order. It's not my belief. I came to the meeting prepared with what I knew was correct. And it is correct. And I want whatever way we state it to mention-- I would prefer to strike-- can we strike out something from the meeting minutes? Can we strike out "directors were informed that the proper time to request changes to the meeting agenda"? Can we strike something out? So we can have it there and have a strikethrough on that whole paragraph.

Except that actually happened at the meeting.

But it was wrong.

But it happened at the meeting.

I get it.

So at this point, Director Hagos, you have stated where we're at right now. We can't go back and adjust that. But you're stating what you wanted to say. And I think that is on record right now to reflect that.

So before these next meeting minutes are then put together, can I review them so that I make sure that what I am stating is accurately reflected on the meeting notes for the next meeting? I don't want any confusion. I'd love to review the notes-- or maybe I can jot down my brief statement so it can be included in the notes. Do you know what I mean? So that my words are accurately reflected. I'm concerned about that.

Well, this is being recorded, so that's where the verbiage and everything is coming from. I'm not sure how much more accurate we can be with that than the voice recording. And this is from Director Hagos stating this so--

OK, I can be satisfied with that. Thank you.

And I would suggest you need to withdraw your motion from the floor.

OK. So then withdrawing a motion means we don't change meeting minutes because we can't change meeting minutes because that's what they were stated on record. However, today's comment will be reflected in the next meeting to then be able to go through a group process, OK?

Yes. All right. I remove my motion from the floor. Thank you.

So does that also include 6.1.3 as well, Director Hagos? OK.

Also, I'd like to have our record also reflect that at one point during that September 4-- this is Director Petrini, by the way-- that during that meeting, I did call a point of order. And in our directors' handbook that we were given in onboarding, it states we use Robert's Rules, period. It doesn't say loosely. It doesn't say anything else. And it gives guidelines for directors to be followed.

So it's up to us, obviously, to educate ourselves on how we use these processes in order for us to do our business. And at one point, I did say a point of order, which it was not-- what is the word? It wasn't recognized-- thank you-- for what that's supposed to do. And that's supposed to return us back to our business, as we were getting off topic.

And so the minutes also stated that I did say a point of order but that our chairman was talking at the same time. So it didn't reflect that it happened. But anyway, just for that point of record, when a point of order happens or is stated, everything's supposed to stop. It's supposed to be recognized to get us back on task. So that's what I'd like to state for the record.

OK.

Thank you.

Thank you so much, Director Petrini. So, Director Hagos, 6.1.2, you have removed. Now let's discuss 6.1.3.

Thank you.

And that is the September 16 special board meeting.

Great, thank you. OK. Before we move on to the next one, we need to do a vote on item 6.1.2.

OK. Well, let's go. 6.1.2. Now, can I please have a motion to approve that?

I'll make a motion to approve 6.1.2, the September 4, 2024 regular school board meeting minutes. And this is Director Tidholm.

Can I please have a second? Can I have a second in regards to board chair second?

I can second that for--

OK. Director Hagos seconded. All in favor?

Aye.

This is going to be a roll-call vote-- I'm sorry. This is a roll-call vote since the item was removed from consent agenda.

Oh. Roll call, please.

Director Petrini?

Yea.

Director Van?

Yea.

Director Hagos?

Nay.

Director Tidholm?

Yea.

President Alvarez?

Yea

This motion passes four to one.

Thank you. Now moving to item 6.1.3 that was removed from the consent agenda-- Director Hagos?

OK. So in the September 16 notes, it indicates that the meeting was adjourned and that the motion was passed unanimously. I did not re-enter the room at 7:02. The custodian had stopped me and greeted me as I was coming back into the room. And she had saw me walking in [INAUDIBLE] spent a few minutes to say hellos. And so I rushed back to join the discussion for a joint adjournment, and the recording line was disconnected prior to my restatement in response to the motion to adjourn.

So now that I'm understanding that we won't be able to do anything about those notes, I do want to be clear about me not having been recorded. There was no unanimous adjournment to that meeting. I did not make a statement. The line was disconnected before I got to the table.

Thank you so much for that. I believe on that meeting that we had three directors that were in the room that did move to adjourn. I believe you and I were not there in the room because we were talking out there on the floor. So when we came in here, the three board members that were there did move and close the meeting down. So we did have a consensus at that point. But--

That's OK, just to note that I was not present. The line ended before I got to say that I adjourned the meeting-- so important to note.

All right, point taken. Thank you. Thanks for that clarification. So with that said, would you like to have a motion to approve 6.1.3 of the consent agenda? Can I please have a motion?

I can move that we approve the agenda notes.

And for the record, that was Director Hagos.

Can I please have a second?

I'll second.

Director Tidholm?

Roll call, please.

Director Tidholm?

Yea.

Director Hagos?

Yea.

Director Van?

Yea.

Director Petrini?

Yea.

President Alvarez?

Yea.

This motion passes five to none.

Thank you very much. Going to move on to our-- we have no action items, and now we're going to move to our intro and action item. This is 9.1, approval of the 2024-'25 superintendent evaluations focus themes. Any comments or questions?

OK, I've got some comments. Where should I start? OK. Sorry. There's one here. OK, so a couple of things-- in the bar, it lists that due to the cyber incident, we don't have access to the necessary metrics or growth expectations. And the board hasn't discussed any of these things or feedback on such measures. So that is a concern of mine, which is why I had voted to approve the motion on the table by Director Petrini to separate this for action and intro.

I also think there has been an unfair block to fair and free and safe space for the board team to debrief in an executive session. That did not happen. And I still have a question on procedure 1630. It's been raised with no action. And at least two of the five board directors have yet to receive training on the evaluation process. And there have been changes and inconsistent actions to the evaluation process made without board discussion or consent from the full board, rendering this process incomplete.

So a few more comments around this-- to me, these are new patterns of practice. And they are contributing to the erosion of our board synergy, so much so that even our own recent self-assessment results show a collective consensus of a significant 34% drop in our belief that the board is providing responsible governance. This is also a superintendent evaluation category where our board consensus rated the superintendent performance on standard 8 by consensus, titled collaboration with the board, be E and F, has not meeting expectations for proficiency.

This is not a personal issue. And in connection to this topic, standard 7, titled operations and management, being B, effectively managing fiscal resources in accordance with board priorities and instructional improvement, also did not meet board expectations for proficiency. So this is by board consensus.

I'm going to do a point of order--

Point of order. This is getting into his evaluation, personal-- so this is not a place to discuss his evaluation. These are comments around the focus theme. This is not for his evaluation.

We have a--

So I'm going to actually second that. So this 9.1 is in regards to the superintendents evaluations focus things. This is not from past evaluations. This is for the future. So if you would like to make any other suggestions versus going back to previous evaluations-- please be cautious of that. OK, Director.

And to note, that was also executive session that you're discussing in.

Thank you.

We have a legal memo that says what is in the evaluation, you can state. And I am only stating what is in the evaluation per our legal memo. It is not from executive conversations. Plus--

Point of order.

--I have asked for--

I'll second--

President Alvarez's point of order.

Point of order-- there is no deficiency ever listed in anything anywhere.

President Alvarez, can you state that again?

[INAUDIBLE] I just want to clarify that if we want to talk about this, there has been no deficiency anywhere in any evaluation, current or anything. So the deficiency is coming from her personally. This is not coming from the board.

[INAUDIBLE] I did not say deficiency. I did not say deficiency.

Thank you, President Alvarez. Director Hagos?

I did not say deficiency. I specifically said not meeting expectation for proficiency, which is what is stated on our evaluation. These issues necessitate adequate time and attention. I have asked for an executive session, a fair, safe, and opportunity for the board to deliberate in a personal and private space that has not been given.

Point of order-- we have had two executive sessions and you both-- well, you have had enough time to discuss. This is never going to be enough time. The last executive session, two of the board directors really were the ones who talked the majority of the time. So we can have another executive session, and it's never going to be enough time.

And Director Tidholm, I'll second the point of order and note the executive session was specifically noted in that meeting prior where it was approved that was for the evaluation of the superintendent, not process. And it was not in regards to the evaluation of the superintendent.

OK.

I would like a point of order for what has been stated by Director Tidholm and by Director President Alvarez, because they are specifically stating things in executive session, which I have not spoken on. I have spoken on things that have been clear conversations by way of what I am able to do.

So just last thing is that we have more time between intro and action items to address widely accepted items, like the purchase order of milk, than we do to address serious misalignment with pushing this agenda item. I'm concerned.

Thank you. Any other directors' comments or questions?

I just want to add, here on the document, why board action is necessary, it says, "The board shall establish evaluation criteria and shall be responsible for reviewing the performance of the superintendent as provided by statute? A lot of these criterias were pulled out. And while board has-- it feels like-- has not been able to add on to the things that we had asked, it also says that the board and the superintendent shall mutually agree on those focus themes. And that is where I think we're having our disagreements.

So I think what she's asking for is that an executive session be allowed where the board is able to deliberate without the presence of our employee so that we can have a mutual agreement on the criteria as stated.

Thank you.

And that was Director Petrini.

That was Director--

Director Petrini.

Thanks. And--

I'll just say for the record that in the procedure of the superintendent evaluation, it's a mutual agreement between the board and the superintendent.

And that was Superintendent Duran.

Which is true, but in our other evaluations, we've had an opportunity for the superintendent to step out for the board to deliberate as a process.

So this is Director Van-- not in regards to our superintendent's evaluation. So if he is going to be graded or judged on criterias, he needs to be in the room so he understands what those criterias are. For us to spring that upon him later at a board meeting, that would be unfair. So I greatly appreciate everybody's input on this.

Per policy and procedure 1613, the superintendent shall be evaluated using the Washington Standards-Based Superintendents Framework. Each year, the board and superintendent shall mutually agree on the focus themes for the year within the framework. This motion would approve the '24-'25 superintendent's evaluation focus themes from the Washington Standards-Based Superintendents Framework.

So Dr. Duran and the board-- it may not be the entire board, but this is mutually agreed upon, standards 2, which is theme C, standard 3, theme A, standard 7, theme B, and standard 8, theme E, be part of your '24-'25 superintendent's evaluation. Dr. Duran, do you agree with these four focus groups, themes being the basis of your evaluation for '24-'25?

Yes, I do agree with these four themes.

That was Superintendent Duran.

Point of order, Vice President Van. These are the themes that we as a collective board, including everybody who's here, asked him and [INAUDIBLE] that these standards were the ones that we wanted him to focus during our feedback time last year. So I think there was some kind of now misunderstanding.

We wanted him to narrow things down so he could focus on things. And now, this is what he has done based on our feedback previously.

Thank you, President Alvarez.

With that being said, I would move that we approve the introduction and action item 9.1 to-- I'm sorry, the 2024-2025 superintendent evaluation focusing from the Washington Standards-Based Superintendent Framework, one standard 2 B and C, works to reduce opportunity and achievement gaps, to number 2, standard 3, theme A, which advocates for student learning as a district's highest priority. Number 3, standard 7, theme B, which effectively manages fiscal resources in accord with board priorities and instructional improvement.

And number 4, standard 8, theme E, which provides necessary support for effective board decision-making. And can I have a second?

I'll second that.

Adriana, please roll call.

Director Van?

Yea.

Director Tidholm?

Yea.

Director Petrini?

No.

Director Hagos?

Nay.

President Alvarez?

Yea.

This motion passes three to two.

Thank you. Moving on to 9.2, this is a motion to approve the Highline School Board's prioritization of items for the WSSDA legislative advocacy. Any questions or comments?

I do have a quick comment, just want to thank Director Tidholm and Director Petrini for being there at the assembly. You gained an extra day, but thank you for being there and advocating on behalf of Highline. With that said, can I please have a motion?

Just real quick, can we read off some of the priorities? Because what we're talking about right here is putting together based on how we are-- WSSDA is asking all the districts to weigh in on what legislative priorities that we, as Highline, want to incorporate-- sorry Highline School Board members.

So we had three members giving us a quorum for voting. And we had eight items that were in alignment with at least one or two other board members, that being career and technical education funding-- and this is where we're asking WSSDA to legislate and advocate on our behalf-- career and technical education funding, class size reduction funding, comprehensive school and student safety, expansion of work-based learning opportunities-- a big, big thing here-- full funding of basic education, literacy, and reducing barriers to post-secondary education.

So I will help move that the board approve the eight items rated as high-priority items for the WSSDA to focus on by the majority of the directors who indicated their thoughts on the WSSDA 2025 legislative priorities.

Can I have a second, please?

Just so I understand, we have 8 out of 10 priorities covered already. And are we fulfilling the other two, or are we just stopping there?

We only had eight that overlapped between board members.

OK.

I was just doing-- Yeah.

I'll second.

Roll call, please.

Yeah. And for the record, that was Director Hagos seconding the motion. Director Van?

Yea.

Director Petrini?

Yes.

Director Tidholm?

Yea.

Director Hagos?

Yea.

President Alvarez?

Yea.

This motion passes five to none.

Thank you, Director Petrini, for sharing what those positions were. I should have done that. Thanks.

That's OK.

All right. Moving on to our intro items-- 10.1, this is motion to approve learning assistance program, Readiness to Learn Partnerships. I believe we have a presentation.

Yes, good evening. This is Lisa Hendrickson, assistant superintendent, here to talk about our Readiness to Learn of the Learning Assistant Program funds. And so every year, we set aside a percentage of our Learning Assistant Program funds. We are allowed up to 15%. But historically, I don't think that we've set aside more than 5% of our Learning Assistant Program funds.

And per the rules, we are required to bring these partnerships before the school board for approval. So we're here for introduction. I wanted to talk a little bit about our process. And just also, so you know, the funds are allowable for both academic and non-academic partnerships. And so you heard from a few of our partners this evening, but we also have some other details in the bar about some of the other partners. We try to round out between both academic supports and also non-academic supports.

So our process includes-- it starts in the spring. We reach out to our community partners. We have a listserv of at least 80 partners where we invite them to provide information which will ultimately go into our partnership catalog. So in that catalog, partners can provide information about their programming, the schools that they'd be able to serve, or the level. Some of our partners only serve in certain regions. So they provide that information.

We do provide technical assistance for our community partners for that process. Once that process is closed, we submit the catalog to our school leaders, and they can submit interest in a partner. We also provide technical assistance to our school leaders to support that process. And our family and community engagement specialists also support our building leaders in that process as well.

From there, there's a cross-departmental team. And also, in collaboration with our ILEDs, we begin a matching process. So we try and find partners and schools who've both just decided that they would like to work together. We look for things like distribution across our district as best we can to have a wide spread across our district.

We like to take into consideration the number of partners the school may already have in place or not have in place. It is very important for us to ensure that our partners are aligned to our strategic plan. So we check for alignment to our strategic plan, as well as our district priorities or initiatives, as well as school's annual action plans. And so that is how we landed on the partners we have. You will notice that they are in different funding categories.

In our partnerships office, we have three funding categories, two of which we put out through this process, integrated, coordinated, and collaborative. And it just really is an indication of the depth of the level of the partnership at the school level. And so the deeper you are involved with the school, the more money-- or multiple schools. And if it's something like more of an after-school type program, it's a \$10,000 award.

I just want to note, these are for partners that go through our formal partnership agreement process. We have many partners that don't have to go through a partnership agreement process because the threshold for us is for organizations that are providing services to student to highlight students on school grounds. So that's the threshold for the formal partnership agreement process. But I do want to acknowledge that we have many partners in our district that are just not going through this formal process. I'm happy to take questions.

Directors, questions?

OK, you went really fast. And I do have questions, and you probably have already answered many of them. So I think I'm going to stick to a couple that I wanted to highlight now. And then if something comes up for me again, I'll send a message out so you know that I still have some thoughts around a specific question. OK.

So the first one is, I saw that there was 16 partners that had applied and submitted a request. And so I'm curious. I think we were able to provide some sort of-- not necessarily an award letter but acceptance letter of some sort for 9 out of the 16. I'm curious, who were the others that were denied?

I would love to answer your question. That information is online. [LAUGHS] I can't access it right now.

OK.

But I will get you that information as soon as I'm able to access it.

OK. I'm OK with that. I'm just processing to make sure I don't ask the questions that you've already answered. OK, let's see. I guess that's the only other one. Well, I do have others. But right now, the only other question I have is, when we are looking at these partners, I know that-- when I think of LAP, I think of all the needs inside of our school buildings. And I know that you have already done your job in making sure that these are going to be services provided on school grounds. I get that.

And with that, one of the things is that, when you were thinking about LAP services, you're thinking about reading and writing and mathematics. And I think about all of our building educators who are trying to find ways to provide what we would consider to be in TSS work tier 1, tier 2, tier 3 and all these things that happen throughout the school day.

My interest is learning, how are these partners going to contribute to alleviate that load on our educators in the classrooms who are trying to do some work to close those gaps in those academic areas? How will this contribute? So I've always been looking for some sort of report that would give me some sort of measures that says, hey, these kids that have been a part of this program are now attending school more.

Or, look, they're helping with some literacy skills and deficits that they have-- or mathematic closures, mathematic fluencies. And we're not getting that. And so I'm curious, how are we looking back and saying these funding pieces that we're offering via our very, very limited LAP funding-- and I know-- you've told me before, it's a very small number of our LAP funding. I know that.

But still, every single dollar counts in the building. And I'm curious, how does that happen with these partners? I guess that's my overarching question.

So I'm just going to repeat back to make sure I understand your question. How are we measuring or evaluating our partners and the effectiveness of their partnership in supporting a school's annual action plan goals or strategic plan goals?

Student learning--

Student learning.

Math, mathematics, writing, and literacy.

So we do have to do some annual reporting on the students who are receiving services through the Readiness to Learn Partnerships. So we're happy to share that report with you.

Yeah, that's OK. I was just-- more so these partners that are coming to us and saying we're doing all these wonderful things, which don't get me wrong. I know they're doing wonderful things. But when we we're using LAP funding or Readiness to Learn funding for it, how is it contributing to the progress that I know our building people need desperately in terms of support with those things? How is it contributing?

I'm not able to answer explicitly in this moment. I don't have any of their reports in front of me. We do have a report that we have to provide to the state about the students who are being served through these partners, and I'm happy to provide that to you. And that might provide you some information.

We also have-- depending on the agreement and the partnership agreement-- we do have reports from each partner. And sometimes it's quarterly, biannually, or annual reports. And it would have to be in the aggregate and provide you individual student information. But we can certainly provide you with some of the reports from the end of the year for some of these partners.

And then to answer your specific question, that's something that we can ask schools. I'll use reading partners as an example. I should just name that the schools are asking for these partners. So it's not us deciding that a partnership is going to happen at a school.

It's a school looking at their annual action plan and their goals and deciding, this is a partner that's going to do exactly what you're asking for. So we have PlayAll technologies at McMicken and others. These are partnerships that schools are asking for because they believe that the partners are going to do what you're asking for. But I think we can get some reports that might provide you with some detailed information.

Yeah. With this agenda item, we do have time between action and intro. So I think we have plenty of time to get that done.

If we can access it. If this is--

Thank you.

It's all online.

Thank you.

Thank you. Any other directors, any questions?

I'd like to second that, seeing those reports or just how you guys determined out of those 16, picking those nine and what they said that-- how they're using those funds. It would be good to see how those are being used. So I'm also interested in those reports, at least for the ones that were listed that were giving listening to.

One of my other questions is, how does one community group become a community partner? Is there a deadline or just an open application for any entity to do that? If they're already serving on school grounds, such as our robotics teams, could they apply to be a community partner?

OK, let me answer your first question. So we won't have reports for the partners that were selected this year unless they happened to do programming last year. And I will have to confirm that for you. So I don't want to promise you something that I can't promise.

So some of these are new ones, some of the nine that were selected? We don't--

I just--

They're not previous--

--can't access the information to tell you.

Sure.

I really am sorry. Normally, I have more details. And I don't have access to it. It's all online. But for those who submitted to our catalog-- and just so you know, our catalog is for more than just Readiness to Learn Partnerships. It also is a way to provide some information about other organizations that provide services.

So for those who submitted in the catalog, the schools select. And sometimes there's just not a match. We've had situations where a partner indicated that they wanted to provide services to a school, and a school did not indicate that they wanted that partner in their school. So it's a matching process, like match.com or whatever.

Like, they need someone that's supporting the supporting the program per se?

A school just has to want the partnership.

We facilitate the partnership process. But in the years that I've supported partnerships and the team and leader, if a school doesn't want the partner or if the partner doesn't want to be at the school, it's not going to work. And so we've tried to design a process where there's mutual agreement on the partnership, meaning that the school has indicated that they have capacity to support the partner, whether it be through space, helping recruit and all of that stuff.

And sometimes schools just aren't interested in a partner, and the partner just isn't interested in that school. It just happens. OK. So your second question-- remind me.

It was mostly-- so we already talked about that. It's an open-ended application process being-- I actually don't remember what my second question was.

Oh, I remember now that you say-- so how would a partner go about being? So, again, there's formal partnership and informal partners. So we have partnerships with Supporting Parents in Education and Beyond. We don't have a partnership agreement with them because they're not providing direct services to students on our campuses, but we consider them a partner. We work with them closely as they work with our families. We attend their workshops and sessions, and they support our families. So it is a partnership in nature, but there's no formal partnership agreement because they're not meeting the threshold.

And the partnership agreement is really a contract or an MOU. And it includes the language, like liability language, indemnification, all the things that protect both organizations should something go home, has information about where they're going to be, what time they're going to be there, has information-- the scope of services, what schools they're going to be at.

So it's really a contracting process that provides us with the information and has the liability language we want in there and that they want in there, negotiated-- but generally that we want to run through our insurance companies and all of that. So the formal partnership agreement process is what this is about, providing services to Highline students on school grounds in partnership with the school.

Are the Readiness to Learn funds only open to community partnerships? Is that per policy or procedure or just precedent, that just that's the way we've always done it?

They're intended for community organizations who are serving Highline students. It's an allocation of state funds, the Learning Assistant Program dollars that goes to Highline School District intended to be used for Highline students. And so we just run it through this process.

OK. Thank you.

OK.

And for the record, that was Director Petrini asking questions.

Yeah.

Thank you.

Thank you so much. 10.2, this is motion to approve beginning educator support system, which is the best grant annual approval. Any questions or concerns, questions or comments? Dr. Hagos?

I do. OK. I'll start off with this one. So the 10.2-- or I should say the best program grant specifically had listed school counselors and other ESA groups that are either eligible or receiving support through the educator mentorship program. And I'm unsure if that's still continuing. I didn't see that same language on the bar for this year.

Thank you, Director Hagos. I wanted to introduce-- Deena Russo is our director of professional learning, Sara Baker, executive director of workforce planning. I'm here mostly as a moral support, but I also have lots of questions and thoughts on things. So I might layer. And I'll let you answer that next question, ESAs and school funds.

Yes. Thank you for the question. Yes, we are very proud to have continued the mentorship for ESAs. And that includes nurses, counselors, social workers, speech pathologists, librarians, occupational, and physical therapists as well. And so, yes, that is still a part of our program.

OK. Thank you. I'm guessing it was just-- because it's happened, and it continues to happen. It probably wasn't listed, but I was curious if it changed. Because I saw something in there that said if we don't approve this bar, then we'll go from having five mentors down to three. And I thought, yikes. Does that mean it also cut, perhaps, some other supports? But that's not happening, so thank you for clarifying that.

OK. Is there any feedback you received or gathered that you think is important to share with the board in terms of what the onboarding process and/or mentees giving some feedback to say, these are the things that are working really well to help sustain me and retain me versus other practices that are not doing that really well? Do you have any feedback or anything that you could provide the board?

I was trying to prompt her too also.

[INAUDIBLE]

And then you both have been-- again, Sara Baker-- Deena was sharing with the team last week-- through all of this, we have continued and knew that it would be-- thank you-- knew that it would be important to continue the support with our new educators-- I think, as Mr. Bin said earlier, reimagining teaching twice in five years.

So we've continued those efforts. And they had a new educator workshop the week after when we came back to school. And someone made a comment about having joined the district, the experience that they've had being so coherent, and the continuity of the experience, really, from NEO through into their experience matching with their mentor.

And then in these monthly workshops that they provide right in time, space, and they visit folks in their site. So I'd like to lift Dina's leadership in that I think we're at a place that we do have coherence from entry to orientation, onboarding, and then through into what we're building in the induction program. Does that address your question?

It does. Thank you. I myself am a BEST mentor-- and I have been for many years-- for new counselors, new educator counselors in the district. And I appreciate every effort you are putting into making sure our new folks are both sustained and retained. So just thank you for your work.

Can I just add on one really quick thing? Every year, we have almost 100% participation by our new teachers. Every year, about 80% of them want to come back for year two. And three big parts of our program-- it's not just mentorship. It's actually a three-day induction in summer, which is collaborative across our district. And then we also have the mentorship. And then what Sara was mentioning is around our ongoing professional development for our new educators. So yeah, I just want to make sure you all knew that.

To your point, Deena is doing big things. She's got a great team doing a lot of good work. So thank you for the gratitude [INAUDIBLE].

Directors, any other questions from any other directors?

I do have one, but Director [INAUDIBLE].

So thank you, Deena, so much for being up here-- and, Sara, you as well-- and for writing the bar out and penmanship. Great penmanship, by the way. In regards to the grant, that is for two additional peer mentors. So that would be a total of five. And that's just for a one-year contract, right? Or how far does this grant go?

These [INAUDIBLE]?

Yeah.

OK.

Every year, it's a renewal. So yeah, that's just for this school year. So every year, we have to reapply for the grant.

All right. Thank you so much. That concludes my questions.

The question's from Director Van. Thank you.

Yeah, Joe Van. Thank you very much. Moving on to 10.3, this is motion to approve the Highly Capable Students Program State Formula Grant 2024 through 2025. I believe we have a presentation.

Good evening, everyone. I'm Jennifer Reinig, deputy superintendent. I just want to set the context for this. You have a few annual grants for action in front of you tonight. So this is the second of the list. Each year, school district across the state of Washington have opportunity to apply for the Highly Capable Program Formula Grant. In alignment with our policy 6101 and with grant application requirements, board approval of an annual program plan is required.

I'm here with Jana Parker, executive director of student learning, who will provide a short overview of key components of our annual plan for this year.

And Dr. Reinig, just one clarification-- these items are for introduction today.

For introduction-- thank you for that clarification.

And just as a reminder-- thank you for some of these questions. Just as a reminder, the components of our plan are consistent from year to year and follow a structure that are required by the state. Our plan in many ways resembles what we've done over the course of the last several years. This year, we've adjusted a few things based on new requirements and feedback that we've received.

So last year, one of the changes is, we gave a new cognitive screener that had three subtests within that cognitive screener to second and fifth grade. This year, we're adjusting to second and fourth grade. Because with that adjustment, any newly-identified fourth-grade student going into fifth grade would then have a Highly Capable learning plan that they would work through in combination with their parents, family, and teacher to work about what's best for them.

Another change that we have is, over the course of the last several years, we've had requests for our children in our students newly identified to stay in their neighborhood school. And as our movement towards full inclusion that we have, the Challenge Program is being phased out. So any newly-identified student in elementary will only get a Highly Capable Learning plan. Those students-- it's almost a grandfather clause. Those students who have already been a part of the Challenge Program have the option to stay in the school that they're currently at or return back to their neighborhood school.

And then lastly, again, we heard from the board last year about wanting to make sure we have more parents involved. And so this year, you'll notice that the plan will involve a student survey. And while that is not a requirement of the [INAUDIBLE] 392-170, we recognize the importance and desire to continue to collect feedback and evaluate our services.

Yes, this is definitely a family survey. Happy to answer any other questions.

Directors, any questions or comments?

You said that the Challenge Program is being phased out. So does that mean for future students coming in that we won't be doing a high-cap identifying test set anymore? Is that what you're saying? So is this grant going to be going away?

No, no, no. The grant will still say. We will always have a process by law to identify students for Highly Capable service. What, historically, the Challenge Program was was, if a student was identified in elementary, they would be sent to one of two schools to participate in the Challenge Program. That-- over the course of the last, specifically, two to three years-- students and families have asked for them to remain in their neighborhood school, thus not meeting the need to be bused to a Challenge Program. So we're addressing the needs that way.

OK, that makes more sense. Thank you.

And for the record, that was Director Petrini asking questions.

Yes, just a few more questions. So these students, once they're identified, they stay in their home school. They stay in their general ed class. But as I read something about, they learning the same things. They just get to go deeper. How does that work? Do they have an extra assistant that's helping them delve deeper? Is it more homework? Is it more reading? What does that look like?

We definitely don't want it to be more homework. I don't mean to cut you off, so go ahead with that. But that's an absolute no.

So what is the Highly Capable portion of this when you say that they're going deeper? And how are we measuring that they're actually getting what they need out? So a lot of students who are bored in class that need that extra-- or is it self? Is it like, they have to do it themselves, self-directed, in a way?

Yes and no. So one of the things that the grant does provide us for is we have Thrively, which is an online component but really servicing the whole child. And so the Thrively component that all of our Highly Capable students in elementary have access to is kind of a self-assessment. What are their interests? What do they like to do? What do they want to work on?

We had a recent conversation with a third-grade student that really wanted to learn how to quiet their mind and how to meditate. And so Thrively is something that they access during the regular school day that allows them more of that self-interest in addition to their schoolwork that they work on amongst their peers within the classroom.

In efforts of what does it look to go deeper-- so standards-based grading, our shift to standards-based grading has been a great Avenue for that. So when we look at, what is a 1? What is a 2? What is a 3? What is a 4? So if students are already at a 3, then they work with the classroom teacher to go deeper into, what does that standard truly entail and how can I support that?

And oftentimes, that's either peers in the classroom, or they can work within the peers in the same grade level that may be in another classroom.

So one thing-- I noticed as we're talking about that we are equity based in all that we're trying to do, we're trying to give more options in equitably identifying more students, those of different languages and backgrounds-- but we also seem to lament that who we identify does not mirror our diversity.

Do we have that same kind of expectation when you look at a child with special needs? Are we looking at them about, oh, there's more white kids that have special needs than Black kids. Are we looking at those the same way? Because a neurological disorder kind of hits all of us the same way. So when you look at a student who has more capabilities, why are we looking at their skin color in the advantages they might be tapping into just because that's what's happening in their brain?

I'm trying to understand why we would look at a child that way when we're trying to disaggregate this information. And I don't see we do that very much with special needs. A child with special needs, they're going to get that help. That is just what they need-- same with High Cap. I feel like if a student's identified as needing more, that race does not play into the fact that we should be giving that student what they need. Can you just help me understand just a little bit more why we break it down like that?

So one of the things that we really try to do is blind score when we are looking at Highly Capable services and students. So Washington requires us to have at least two data points. And that's why we use an additional screener to have a third potential data point, because we don't want it to be so necessarily academic based.

And so one thing that we know when we are talking to trying to be more inclusive and really look at the scope of what our district represents-- our identification should mirror our students. And right now, our identification is overtly white, and it doesn't mirror the representation of across the district. And so we're really trying to take those steps to try and mirror what we currently have in our district by taking away some of those things that historically have placed white students above other students.

So wouldn't the goal then just to include more students and not be taking away from others just because of that, just because of their race? We should be growing this program as we identify more and more students, correct?

Yes. And I just want to be really clear so that there's not any misinterpretation-- that we are not using race as a factor for identification. Rather, we are looking at the demographics of our district and how our identification process went. And as Janice said, to what degree is our identification processes recognizing equitably the strengths across all of our student groups?

Similarly, you asked about special education, and we do similar things. Again, that's not a consideration in evaluation or identification for service eligibility. But we do look at-- as with many programs, we take a step back after the fact. And we say, did the process that we had in place this year best represent our full community? So I just want to name that explicitly, that it's not a factor in the upfront. It's a way that we look at our efforts and evaluate our efforts after the fact.

Thank you. I appreciate your explanation.

Can I add one more thing? There's another distinction too between-- once we give a student in Highline Highly Capable, they have that for the duration of their time in Highline. Versus if a student has an IEP, we are constantly looking and evaluating and progress monitoring for-- because the goal isn't necessarily for a student to have an IEP for the duration in Highline. We to give them what the resources that they need and then move them on. So the whole goal for that is they don't need that anymore.

OK, thank you.

Thank you. Any other questions?

OK. I do have questions, but you have answered many of them. And I'm formulating new questions. So I think I'm going to pause on some of the questions. The only thing I think I recognize in your answering of my questions was-- I was wondering why, overall, the High Cap program numbers have gone down over the years. And I'm guessing now-- I'm assuming-- you can correct me if I'm wrong. But I'm assuming the Challenge Program is being phased out.

And those number of children who are in the Challenge Program, because they've been phased out, those numbers are going down. Or is it the identification issue we've been talking about?

It's the identification issue.

It is the identification issue. OK. And then just a comment-- I also have recognized a positive note around our kids who are considered twice exceptional. I have seen improvements, and that warms my heart for kids who are autistic or have other learning-related disabilities or health impairments-- are not being excluded from being identified. So something is working. Thank you.

Thank you.

Any other questions or comments?

I have one. Dr. Parker, this is a point of privilege, actually. I just wanted to do a quick shout out to you. You were named from ClassLink in RTM building as our EdTech All-Star instructional leader of the year. So congratulations, my friend. Well deserved.

Thank you very much for that.

[APPLAUSE]

All right, moving on to 10.4. This is a motion to approve the central admin building south tenant improvement approval contract number 1POCP240095 OMNIA efficiency cooperative purchasing contract number 1158. Any questions or comments?

I hear and see none. This is 10.5, motion to accept the State Transitional Bilingual Program, STBPB funds. I believe, Bernard, you're up there, bud.

Good evening, Board. This is Bernard Koontz, executive director of student learning. And I'll be sharing with you some highlights about this application that's in front of you tonight. This is an annual item that we approve, and it's the major grant that supports our services for qualified language learners. There's a couple of things that I want to highlight that we're doing this year to share with you some of the work that's going on and some of the innovation that we're doing to continue this work which, in a major way, supports our bilingual biliterate goal.

So one area to know that we're really focused on this year is looking at our WIDA scores and going deep in those WIDA scores. WIDA was implemented and a little bit interrupted by COVID, in terms of looking at what that data really meant and understanding its growth. Now we've got a couple of years of really solid data to look at with WIDA. And we're able to not only look at where our kids are at but also looking at their progress.

And how did kids do in '23? How did they do in '24? What's that growth telling us? So looking beyond just where they're at, what's the growth and trajectory looking like? That's something that's happening across the state, and we're able to do that here locally as well. So one of the things that we're really focused on is getting that data out to schools, talking to schools about that data, talking to school-based leaders, teacher leaders about what that data means.

Just earlier this week, we were able to figure out how to do that in kind of a complicated way. So we were able to get that data out there, and we look forward to working more with our educators in understanding that. More importantly and equally importantly, we're looking at, how do we share that story with our families and our students so they understand what that data means? And especially when we talk about the later phases of language development, that gets complicated. And that's where we see a lot of our kids slowing down that trajectory.

So that's a phenomenon that is around the country and around the world in language learning but certainly one that we want to tackle here and figure out. And those WIDA scores are giving us an opportunity to do that. So that's a big area of focus for us this year.

Beyond understanding the data, that hard data, we're also looking at our strategies. And how are we continuing to support kids learning and accessing content and developing language skills? And one thing-- just to name-- that we continue to do-- and it's a highlight for us-- is our work around Guided Language Acquisition by Design, or GLAD. If you're in our schools, you might hear teachers talking about GLAD strategies or going to a GLAD training.

We consistently find that those trainings are well received and enjoyed by educators that request them. And that continues to be something that we strengthen and implement. And something exciting that's happened over the last three or four years is really beginning to see how we can implement some of that at our secondary level as well, which is new territory for GLAD as a training model.

And GLAD both involves some very specific instructional practices that are very visual, that help kids engaged. But it also engages teachers in going deeper to understand what language acquisition looks like across different levels. So we're really excited about that continuing to grow.

And I think what you'll be seeing across the year, I hope, is you should be hearing about GLAD in other settings as well and specifically in our literacy work. And so we're really working hard to match and connect what we're doing in language learning with our literacy work and making that connection really explicit and clear, not so that it gets lost in the literacy work, but that it's clearly paired and prominent in that literacy work.

Another area to address is, of course, our dual language programs which we're really proud of in Highline for the number of programs we have and the strength that they have. We continue to be a leader in that area in the Puget Sound region. We now have six elementary schools that are fully implemented, K-5. So we're excited about that.

And that's allowed us to really focus on ongoing sustainability in those programs. And so the implementation phase is rolling up. We're through that in those schools, and now we're able to really focus on understanding what's going well in those programs and focusing on sustaining them.

At the secondary level, we are taking a bit of a step back to really think about what's working well in those secondary dual language programs, where we're running into some capacity and sustainability in those areas. And while our data is good in terms of how kids are performing in those programs, we know that there's some complicated things for us to figure out of what those programs look like. And that's something that we'll be sharing probably over the course of the next couple of years of really refining, what do the secondary opportunities look like in dual language?

And then last but not least to wrap it up, one thing that I'm very excited about bringing back this year is-- we in the past had a practice of really highlighting what we're learning about working with our students at the end of the year in a celebration. That was our Language Learning Symposium. And we bring together our teacher leaders to share what they've been learning and to write that up in a way that really explains what they're trying on, what they're learning to be able to share that with their colleagues and peers.

And with all that WIDA work that I was talking about, that's something that we're going to be doing in helping our teacher leaders do that work and share that and spread that news here within Highline to support our kids and beyond. So that's a few high points from our grant application and what's going on with that body of work this year-- and be happy to take any questions you might have.

Directors, any questions? Director Alvarez?

I have one. It's [INAUDIBLE] question. I may have a question by the time we get to action. But for right now, just I appreciate your enthusiasm, and I recognize your work and your efforts. And it truly is-- I believe it's making a difference. I've heard directly from-- I went to a summer meal program in one of the schools with my little nephews and nieces.

And one of the things that came up as I was walking into the building-- teachers were walking out with these huge GLAD posters they just made. It is summer time. They are so happy to learn about GLAD strategies and to implement them. And they just left completely feeling like they have something in their toolbox to add when they come back into the building at the beginning of the year.

They seemed energized. I don't know what you were doing or what you guys are doing in that capacity, but it was exciting to see. And I guess I'm witnessing it right here in front of me as well right now. So just I appreciate it, and thank you for your work.

Thank you.

Director Tidholm?

I don't have a question but just a comment, having a baby who's in dual language, now in his third year, and previously sitting on the dual language task force to help get Somali into White Center Heights-- really appreciative of just the language that we have in the district and all of the work that you do. So I just want to say that I appreciate you, and I see you.

Thank you.

Director Alvarez, do you have any questions?

No, I don't, sir. I am just so grateful to have a bilingual brain. Thank you.

Thank you. So I do have one question and one comment. In regards to-- this is a pretty big grant, \$1.7 million. And the community engagement piece-- can you share how our parents and our staff were involved in crafting and creating this?

Yeah, yeah. So they have been. And some of that specific language is actually outlined more explicitly in our Title III grant, which complements the TBIP grant. The TBIP is the state money, and Title III is the federal money that supports that. So in terms of what you have in front of you today, it doesn't outline that as much because it's not in the state application, but it's in that period federal application. So in terms of where it is on paper, that's where you can see more about the federal requirements around that.

In terms of family engagement and stakeholder input, there's a couple of ways that that happens. One way is there's an advisory team that meets around bilingual education that my colleague Adina Thea convenes on a regular basis. And that group hears feedback. They post questions and get feedback from that group.

One of the things that we've recognized and that we're building into our process for next year-- or one thing that we're building into our planning process that will happen this year for '25-'26 is support for schools to do some of that input on their school-based programs.

So right now, there's a process that our schools go through. Beginning in January, where they begin to look at their resources and make plans for the following year, they submit how they want to use some of their school-directed resources around language learning. And we're building in and layering in some expectations and support for them to engage with their families directly for what that looks like.

Oftentimes, what we hear when we do that kind of engagement at the district level with families is things like-- many things that you would expect to hear about having language access for materials that are coming home and ability for students to be able to study and thrive in their home language and have those opportunities. And that's good, and we need to hear that. And what we're trying to really support is some of those messages and more specific messages to get to the school level and to be heard by the folks that are working closest with the students, which is why we have a little bit of a pivot there in trying to support that conversation and engagement to happen at the school level.

Thank you so much. And my last comment was in regards to Director Hagos earlier, Celebrating Bilingual Child Month-- this is parallel right here, so really happy. Thank you so much. Any other questions? I think we're good. Thank you so much.

Thank you.

And our last intro item, 10.6, this is motion to approve the Afghan refugee support grant. Any questions or comments?

Yes, I have questions. OK. So I was curious about a couple of things. The bar mentioned that we have a high number of students that have come from Afghanistan. I think that's how you say it. But I'm curious about the student population in our district. And how do we come up with the number of three being sufficient, just curious?

Oh, sorry, I should say three schools. How did we identify that three schools was sufficient number of schools to support our Afghan students?

Yeah. So for the record, again, this is Bernard Koontz, executive director, responding to a question from Director Hagos. So in terms of the staffing and the program model for this, it really was based on looking at where there was the largest population of students that qualified for this specific grant. So there is a number of students that have Afghanistan as part of their family history, part of their identity.

There's a smaller number of students that qualify for this specific grant. And that's outlined a little bit in the application that they have had arrived within a certain period of time. Those specific students, there was the largest concentration of those students-- which was pretty significant-- was that at three schools where the program is located at Midway, Pacific, and Mount Rainier.

So it had to do really with the numbers of looking at where we could serve the most kids together. And numerically, those three schools were much higher than everywhere else. The one other school that did have a significant population was Parkside-- is the one other school where there is a population. And we worked with that principal around some other kind of complementary resources and staffing that's there through-- actually, the TBIP grant, which I just spoke about, that complements that programming there.

The other thing to know about how the staff is deployed-- they are primarily located at those schools for four days a week to provide direct service and support for those students. But there is one day a week where they come back and plan some centralized supports and are able to deploy out and support other needs across the district.

OK, sorry. A follow-up question I have is-- I'm curious. So in terms of the support services for these three schools-- is it by the school or by the student population-- so I'm curious if there's a caseload, I guess is what I'm trying to say. And if they're not on a caseload-- and then are Afghan students that are not on a caseload will not get services? That's what I'm trying to determine. Is there some sort of a caseload load here? Or is it really, truly just a complete-- the whole school, any Afghan students in that school will receive supports?

Yeah. So this group of students that qualifies for this grant, I would venture to guess 99% plus of them qualify for TBIP services. So there's concurrent services happening. And this grant goes above and beyond what students receive that qualify for TBIP services.

In terms of, do students that don't qualify for this particular grant-- are they going to benefit from that staff being in the building if they speak one of those languages and have this identity? They probably do. However, if there is ever a situation where there might be a cap on number of students that could come to an after-school program, things like that, then it would be prioritized for the students that do qualify. So does that answer the question?

Yes. Thank you.

Yeah. Great.

Thank you.

Any other questions or comments? Hear and see none. Thank you so much, Bernard.

You're welcome. Thank you.

OK, that concludes our intro items. Number 11 is anything that you would like to add to our consent agenda for our next board meeting. OK, hear and see none. That concludes our meeting.

Can I please have an adjournment? Can I have a motion to move--

I make the motion we adjourn.

I'll second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

That's it. Thank you, everybody, for being here.

[SIDE CONVERSATION]