Good evening, everybody. Just give us a couple more minutes. Local live is not streaming just yet. We're going to get them going, and then we'll get started.

Mic test, 1, 2, mic test. And then you tell me

All right, it looks like we're good to go. Welcome, everybody, to our regularly scheduled board meeting. Today's January 22, 2025. Can you please stand up for the Pledge of Allegiance?

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

Before we get to roll call, I have an update I need to share. I have received a written letter of resignation from Director Hagos. Per policy 1114, upon receipt of a director's written resignation, the board shall discuss the resignation at its next regularly scheduled meeting, which is this evening.

The board is acknowledging and announcing the receipt of the resignation per policy 1114. The resignation is effective immediately. I want to thank Director Hagos for her service as a school board member and wish to thank her, the best moving forward. If other directors would like to comment, I would ask that they do that during your director's reports.

If you live in district 5 and are interested in the position, we will be publicly sharing more information soon about the process for filling the vacancy, pursuant to the policy. Thank you, again, to Director Hagos for her service. Roll call, please.

Director Alvarez.

Here.

Director Tidholm.

Present.

Director Petrini.

Here.

President Van.

Here. Thank you. To our left is our superintendent, Dr. Duran.

I had the privilege of hearing our next speaker speak at the Tyee assembly last week in recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Eula Manuel. She kindly agreed to come tonight to share her poem with us. Eula, can you please come on up to the podium and share your poem that you wrote?

[APPLAUSE]

I said, in a world divided, where shadows cast long,

We search for a place we can all belong.

A King's dream, a vision small but so bright,

Caused us to stand, to fight for what's right, power.

He spoke of a time when love conquered hate,

Where unity thrives, and hearts resonate.

No more prejudice bind. In the embrace of humanity, we find peace.

We are all the colors of a vibrant rainbow,

Each hue a story, each heart a glow.

From different paths, we walk together.

In this journey, we find our tether.

Belonging is more than just a place.

It's the warmth of a smile, the touch of grace.

It's the hand that reaches, the heart that cares,

The dream we share in this open air.

So let us rise with voices so strong.

In this tapestry of life, we all belong.

For in unity, we find power

To build a world of love, hour by hour.

Dr. King's legacy, a guiding light,

In our heart, it burns so bright.

Together, we stand. Together, we sing.

In the symphony of belonging, we let freedom ring.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you so much.

[APPLAUSE]

Great job. We appreciate that.

Moving on up, calling for any changes or additions to our board meeting agenda this evening. Directors? Seeing none, OK.

And next up, our recognitions. Our community partner tonight is going to be Becoming a Man, Bam. Can I please have Mr. Abebe come on up?

[APPLAUSE]

Good evening. Thank you so much for calling me up, Board President Van, board directors, and Superintendent Duran. My name is Endalkachew Abebe. I'm the community partnerships manager, and I have the wonderful pleasure of welcoming community partners into our school district.

Before I call up Joe Winger from our BAM and the respective BAM family, I would like to say, community partnerships, specifically powerful partnerships, are built on the collective dedication and investment of you, our school board, our community partners, our school leaders, and, collectively, our students. So it's through that collective that we can work to champion our Highline promise. So with that being said, I would love to welcome Joe to come up and say a few words.

[APPLAUSE]

Hello, hello. First and foremost, I want to just thank you all for your unwavering support through the years, especially in my-- since we started with BAM here in 2019, when I was a BAM youth specialist with my guy over there.

And a lot has happened since then, right? Through the ups and downs, the change in provider with Southwest Youth and Family Services, to youth guidance, and just really want to give a huge, huge thank you to you all, to Kisa, to you, Dr. Duran, for advocating for BAM to continue to be. And these guys right here wouldn't be able to have this place that they can call their own and, you know, have a place where they can express themselves vulnerably and authentically if it weren't for you all.

And before I have my guy come up here, Daniel, I just want to say BAM is in seven different states in the US and in London as well. And in my experience, being in the administrative role with youth guidance, not every site has a school district that is as committed to students' social and emotional well-being, and normalizing how that is just as important as their education as well. So again, thank you, and I'm going to have my guy Daniel come up and share about his experience.

[APPLAUSE]

For me, BAM is more than just a social group where we just talk about how we're doing. It's more of, like, guidance through life and how to navigate through problems as, I mean, I'm going to say, as an adult.

And, you know, even being able to see my peers go through the same thing and go through the same growth with me is really powerful. And it's made me learn a lot in areas where I'm close minded or in areas where I didn't think very deeply about stuff. The BAM program has helped me tremendously and helped me get through a lot of tough times.

And, you know, even when things are up, helped me think further into the future and more clearly. And I'd like to thank BAM and everyone who's helped BAM be a thing in Highline, and yeah.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. One more thing, before I pass it over. I forgot to mention, for those who don't know what BAM is, we are currently in four schools. It's Chinook Middle School, Tyee High School, Highline High School, and Sylvester Middle School, and are definitely hoping to expand to all the schools within the district. Because we want to make sure we can provide this intervention, the support to all our students. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Awesome. Well, we do have a plaque for you. Come on. So can we have you and Mr. Abebe and the students come on up for a picture? That'd be great.

[LAUGHTER]

[SIDE CONVERSATIONS]

OK. Ready, everyone? Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. Now, we're going to do our scheduled communications. On behalf of the board, we sincerely appreciate you taking the time to join us this evening and sharing your thoughts. You'll notice that our norms and guidelines are displayed on the screens for your reference. Please remember that you are addressing the board, and there may be students present or watching who are listening carefully to what you are saying.

Please note while the board is unable to respond directly to your testimony during the meeting, we value your input. Thank you again for being here and speaking with us.

First up is Alex Myrick.

February is Black History month. If done well, this is an opportunity to gain historical insight, promote empathy, understand our heritage, and refute stereotypes.

One of my graduate school professors was a pilot in the 332nd fighter group in World War II, also known as the Tuskegee Airmen. They were true heroes. Frederick Douglass was a brilliant writer and leader of the abolition movement. I wish I had half of his oratorical skill.

The problem at Highline is that Black History month starts with Black Lives Matter week. BLM is violent, Marxist, and corrupt. It has stated a goal of disrupting the nuclear family. As of this afternoon, it still calls for defunding the police, despite the fact that over 96% of Black homicides do not involve police, and Hispanic and white civilians are three times as likely than Blacks to be killed by police. Since 2020, the successful Defund the Police movement has resulted in violent crime and homicides against Blacks skyrocketing.

Director Alvarez and Director Tidholm, you have exhibited a pattern of hearing something in this room that you really don't like, then ignoring three of your posted norms and pretending that the speaker said something despicable or racist, then tearing down the straw man you have just built. This behavior is beneath the office to which you have been elected and a betrayal of the public trust.

Please note, I have denounced the tactics of BLM, not the sentiment in the name. Furthermore, I have endorsed Black History month and not uttered a word against it tonight or previously. Therefore, I trust you will refrain from a reprise of your prior unseemly rhetorical temper tantrums. Thank you.

Next up, Jurnee Robinson.

Excuse me. Hello, and good evening, members of the board. My name is Judy Robinson, and I am a student at Tyee High School. I am here representing my student body and their rights to education.

With the recent political climate and promises from local government officials, as well as members of the board present today, I would like to urge the board to adopt a similar, not the same, policy to Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Procedure 4310. This was implemented in August of 2019.

It reads, the relations with law enforcement, child protective agencies, and the County Health Department. Article 2, section E, subsection 2, line 4 of this policy states that absent of exigent or emergency circumstances, a judicial warrant will be required before an immigration agent, such as an ICE officer, is permitted to access a district school. This, along with the understanding that warrant, will be reviewed by legal counsel to ensure that the warrant is signed by a judge, properly identifies the agency with the authority to search, correctly identifies the search locations, includes the correct date and has not expired, and references a specific person, and if so, allows ICE to contact or question only that person, essentially further protecting our undocumented students and their family in a place that is intended to be a safe educational environment.

I feel that for the purpose of protecting our community and their rights to education in a safe environment, where we know every student by name, strength, and need, and promote our culture of belonging, this motion is but one of many necessary steps needed to be taken. Although I am not directly affected by what I am speaking about today, I empathize with the fear, the anxiety, the pain, and the struggle to achieve and feel supported in my peers, my friends, my staff, and my community as a whole. And that is why I'm here today. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Next up, Patricia Bailey.

Good evening. The Highline School District currently prioritizes using an equity lens to make decisions and form policies. Board Policy 10, Equity, Race and Identity was adopted in 2010. Yet, as of spring 2024, only 33% of students met grade level standards for literacy, and only 22% are on track in math, a major gateway to numerous technical jobs. The emphasis on equity has been a failure for students of color, shifting the focus away from academics to the detriment of achievement and the essential task of preparing students for the future they choose.

On Monday, January 20, 2025, the President signed an executive order titled Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI programs. DEI programs, under various names, have been an immense waste of student learning time, money, and a source of division. The board needs to look honestly at the ill effects of policy 10 and change course.

Another executive order protects the well-being of girls. Quote, "It is the policy of the United States to recognize two sexes, male and female. Sexes are not changeable and are grounded in fundamental and incontrovertible reality. Efforts to eradicate the biological reality of sex fundamentally attack women by depriving them of their dignity, safety, and well-being. My administration will defend women's rights and protect freedom of conscience by using clear and accurate language and policies that recognize women are biologically female and men are biologically male," unquote.

It is essential that Highline School board act quickly in accordance with the common sense direction of these mandates, which are also in the best interest of students. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Next up, Jennifer Fichamba.

Good evening, Dr. Duran and board members. My name is Jennifer Fichamba. I stand here today as an unafraid educator. I'm an educator in the Lake Washington School District, a mom, and a resident of Burien.

Both my son and I are alum of the Highline School District. We are also part of a mixed status community. My son is half Ecuadorian, and we have family and friends here and across the US that are undocumented.

I'm here today because, as you know, the new administration is beginning its deportation and raids of our immigrant communities. In fact, yesterday, DHS, the Department of Homeland Security, issued a statement that schools are no longer sensitive locations, along with churches, hospitals, courtrooms.

I know the district currently has a policy 4300 limiting immigration enforcement in schools. I appreciate the young person that was here that spoke about the need to reinforce these policies. And I also understand that there are laws in place, like *Plyler v. Doe* and FERPA to protect our students.

But I want to ensure that the current policy in the Highline School Districts and districts around are strengthened and our school staff is prepared for what inevitably is going to happen. We will be the front line protecting our students and families. This includes all areas, from bus drivers, to our classrooms, to our kitchen staff, to our custodians. Please, please ensure that our young people and our families are protected in the Highline School District. Thank you so much for your time.

[APPLAUSE]

And last up is AnneMarie Kebre.

Good evening, board. I think there's some great news for this generation. Manufacturing is on the way back. Stellantis has announced there will be making significant investments in US operations. This will return 1,500 jobs from Canada back to the USA. Investment is planned for both Indiana and Ohio plants, further expanding job opportunities.

There are also new technologies on the horizon that our students should not miss out on due to lack of industry and/or low motivation. Our students should be prepared for a bright future and focused knowledge as a foundation. Strong programs in apprenticeship, the trades, and academic excellence will instill confidence and better prepare Highline students for a successful social and financial future. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

And that concludes it for our scheduled communications. Thanks, everybody, for coming out and speaking with us this evening. Superintendent's update-- Dr. Duran.

Yes, thank you, President Van. I want to start by thanking Director Hagos for her service as a Highline School Board member and her work in support of our students. I wish her the best in her future endeavors.

Last week, I was honored to be invited to speak at the Martin Luther King, Jr. assembly at Tyee High School. During my comments, I reiterated my commitment that Highline Public Schools is here to ensure that every student, regardless of their race, background, identity, or where the family comes from, has the opportunity to learn and grow in a safe and supportive environment.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." These words remind us of our shared responsibility to stand up for each other and to create a community where everyone belongs.

I want to thank Eula, who just walked out of the room tonight, for her words today. It was really great to see her. I saw her outside and said she did such a great job. Glad we had her back.

And Jurnee Robinson was part of the student leadership team that put that assembly together, was one of the best student-led assemblies I've been to in a long time. So thank you for all your work, Journey.

So we are implementing new practice, where Jackie Bryan, Highline's chief financial officer, is going to be providing brief budget update once a month at regular board meetings-- are going to be done during the superintendent comments. We're going to start our first one tonight, so I'm going to welcome Jackie up to the podium to share a brief presentation. Welcome, Jackie.

Thank you, good evening, everyone. Perfect

As Jackie is getting prepared, we had the opportunity to go down to Olympia today to speak in favor of the three big bills that we have out there-- Renters in Funding for Special Education, material supplies, operation and other costs, and transportation. It was really great to be there and, I think, also it's great to be there representing Highline, knowing that we're in a financially stable position compared to some other districts. But we're really looking forward to see what our legislators do to further support us. Jackie, go ahead.

OK, thank you. So as mentioned before, this is the first of the monthly updates. You'll see the same format in every update that we do, so it should start looking familiar.

We'll be covering two different topics. The first one will be the 24-25 year-to-date information, so the current year that we're in, how we're doing, what we're projecting through the end of the year. And then the second half will really be around budget development. So what are the key milestones that we've hit in the past month-- what's coming up and what kind of community feedback, student feedback that we're taking into account as we build our budget for next year.

So we'll always start out with where we are with our enrollment, because, as you know, enrollment drives a lot of our funding and is one of the key things that we are looking at on a monthly basis. We are funded on our annual average FTE. So that is something that the state is looking at every month and adjusts our apportionment, which is our funding through the state, on a monthly basis, depending on our enrollment.

Something that's really important about January is that that is the month that the state kind of trues up our funding sources. So from September to December, we're receiving our budgeted amount. So if it's lower-- if we have lower enrollment than projected, then we'd be receiving a higher amount than we would expect. And on the opposite end, if our enrollment is higher, then we adjust in January and start receiving those additional funds for the additional students above projection.

So the great news this year that I'm excited to share is we are over projection. We look very strong with our enrollment. We're currently 550 FTE, so 550 full-time equivalent students, above projected budgeted.

So you can see, I've broken it out by the different age range. So elementary is where we're seeing a lot of growth. There were with 314 over FTE projection in elementary schools.

As I think you've all received the enrollment projections for next year and the report from the demographer, one thing he called out is two different reasons he thinks that we're seeing our enrollment actually stabilize. The first is that we have had some new apartment complexes and housing complexes open in the south end of our district.

The second, and I think the one that's even more important than that, is we have not seen families move out of the region. So that trend we've seen of families leaving either for more affordable housing or for job opportunities, it looks like it's stabilizing, and it's not happening as much now.

So our enrollment this year is actually really, really close to what our enrollment was last year. So we're not growing necessarily, but we're stable in our enrollment.

So the next slide you'll see is our 24-25 year to date. So this is just revenue and expenditure and what we've spent to date, as of December 31.

Now, one thing I really want to stress as we look at these numbers, December is not officially closed. So the way accounting works is that we close months, and that usually takes about two to two and a half months' process for us to close. Because we have to make sure we've received all the revenue for that month, we've accounted for it.

So the numbers that you're seeing will be December numbers. We don't expect them to change dramatically, but just know there's always a potential for them to change slightly as you see the month close.

So our revenue is exactly where we projected it to be. 29% of our revenue has been received, and 30% of our expenditures have been spent. So we're right where we would project ourselves to be at this time of the year.

One thing that we will bring back next month is our updated revenue projections. Because, as I mentioned, we have additional enrollment, so we would expect our revenue to increase.

This is the revenue broken down to date by type. So we receive our revenue in multiple ways. So local, it would be our levy funds, and that's collected usually twice a year. And then we see it kind of come in throughout the year as well.

Our state funding is our largest funding source. That is apportionment. So we'll see that increase now that we're going to receive January apportionment this week.

Our federal amount is, of course, decreased because of the end of ESSER, but it's still projected to be about $32 million this year. And we're right on track for that as well. And then our other funds are our grants or our donations, those types of things.

And then our expenditures-- these are just the five largest expenditures to date. So I didn't include all of them, because there's a lot. But these are the ones that we usually look at on a monthly basis.

So regular instruction is our largest by far, and we're right on track for spending there. Special education, CTE and Skill Center, compensatory education is all of our large, what we would call, grants. So Title I, II, III, LAP LAP high poverty, and our transitional bilingual program.

And then support services-- so that would be everything from custodial, to facilities, to this building, to insurance, anything that would fall under support.

So I'll pause. Those were our kind of up-to-date year-to-date numbers. One thing to note is you probably you haven't yet seen any month closing documents this year. Unfortunately, because we had our cyber incident, that has put business services a few months behind in closing those months. So in between now and the next time I'm up here, you'll see September, October and November close documents come in.

OK, so I'll move on to 25-26 budget development. So enrollment projection for next year-- again, this is AAFTE, so annual average FTE. That's what we build our budget off of. And you can see both medium and low projections.

We always use medium to build our budget, and you can see we're stabilizing, so we may decrease slightly next year. And then I really think as we go into 26-27, we'll need to readjust and work with our demographer to readjust the models to ensure that these are accurate, because we haven't seen the decrease that we had projected.

And just wanted to update you on some of the meetings that we've had just in the past month or so, mainly since we were back from winter break. We had a second meeting with our superintendent advisory leadership team, which is made up of central office and school leaders. And we're really discussing and kind of diving into what a student-weighted formula would look like for resource allocations.

It is just in discussion phases. We're exploring what that could possibly look like. And kind of our key question for the year is how might our resource allocation processes and decisions contribute to our strategic plan priorities in increasingly direct and equitable ways? And so we are working with this group over the next few years to explore that and hopefully bring forth some recommendations.

Our Family Action Committee has also met, and they have broken into subcommittees. And we are very fortunate to have a budget subcommittee this year. We will start meeting with that group, and we will bring back any recommendations and information to you in these updates.

And finally, our last communication that started this month is our Thought Exchange Survey. So it's the first of three that will happen this year. The first one is a very broad question, and we're going to get more specific as we collect the information. So we'll have one in January, one in March, and one in June this year, all around how we can best support our students with our resources.

And what's next? So we have a very, very busy month. January through April is budget development season, and it is a whirlwind. So we have a lot going on just in the next few weeks.

We have our bond sale next week. And so we will-- it occurs Tuesday morning, so we'll make sure to keep you posted after that happens on Tuesday. We have resource alignment training for all of our school leaders next week, so that also happens on Tuesday.

We have our resource alignment tools going out to schools. That will happen the second week of February. Central resource alignment meetings are happening now. So those are the central office department budget meetings.

We are going to dive into initial year-end projections with updated apportionment numbers. So as I said, we're receiving apportionment this week, and then we'll start really doing our projections through the end of the year. So you'll start to see those next month. September through November month-end documents, I mentioned you'll see those.

We'll continue legislative analysis on any proposed bills. We've already received four, and we've done the analysis on those, and they look really promising. So I think there's a lot of hope and encouragement there.

And we will continue to go down to Olympia and testify in support of all of these bills as they come forward. And I'm happy to take any questions.

Directors, do you have any questions? We have none, Jackie.

OK. Thank you.

Great. And thank you, Jackie. And again, just for the board and our community, it's kind of something new that we're putting in place in order to provide more transparency around our enrollment numbers, our budget numbers, as we prepare. Even though we're in the middle of the year, we're preparing for next year so that when we get to that point of actually adopting our budget in June, July, the committee has the opportunity to provide more feedback along the way. So thank you, Jackie.

All right. At this time, I would like to invite Holly Ferguson, our Chief Policy and Strategy Officer, to the podium to speak to why revised Policy 3205 was removed from consideration on the agenda. And then we're going to do a little ad lib after that.

Thank you very much. Love the ad lib.

So at our last meeting, I introduced a revised version of Policy 3205, Sexual Harassment of Students. The revisions were based on a new model policy from WSSDA that incorporated the new Title IX guidelines.

During the meeting, I was asked-- and it a great question-- whether the incoming administration could change the new guidance and if we should delay the revisions. I responded that based on advice I had received from WSSDA, which indicated that any new administration would take at least a year to go through the regulatory process, that we should move forward with the revised policy.

Less than 24 hours after that meeting, a circuit court judge in Kentucky ruled that the Title IX guidelines were overbroad because they provided protection from harassment and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. This ruling, which vacated the guidelines nationwide, represents extreme judicial overreach.

Following the decision, we sought guidance from WSSDA again, who advised us to put the revisions on hold. As a result, that item has been removed from consideration.

While the proposed revisions would have extended federal sexual harassment and discrimination protections to students and employees based on gender identity and sexual orientation, I want to be clear that maintaining the current versions of Policy 3205 for students and 5011 for staff do not reduce the protections that Highline Public Schools and the state of Washington extend to our LGBTQIA+ community, especially our transgender and non-binary students, staff, and community members who continue to face attacks, not only from the nation's capital, but within our own community.

Despite the hateful rhetoric that is coming from all directions, Highline remains committed to upholding our policies and the laws of Washington State. The Washington law against discrimination protects each of us-- students, staff, family, and community-- from discrimination based on sex or sexual orientation, including protections for transgender and non-binary individuals.

While some seek to depersonalize and to target, we remain committed to serving, supporting, and protecting all members of our community. Our student and staff-based policies focused on discrimination and sexual harassment remain in effect, and regardless of what happens at the federal level, we will continue to uphold our policies and the laws of the state of Washington. Thank you.

Thank you, Holly. Jeb Binns was not able to be here tonight, the President of Highland Education Association. Vice President Shawna Moore is here. Good to see you, Shawna.

But I want to just make a note that Jeb and I did send out a joint message from the school district to our entire staff to really, again, just reemphasize that we hold steadfast to our promise to know every student by name, strength, and need. They graduate, prepare for the future they choose, that we will continue to protect the rights and safety of our students and staff.

We also spoke to guidelines for staff if immigration enforcement comes to school. And since we know that that has definitely been something that's been in the media, we want to talk a little bit about that. And appreciate some of the people who came in tonight to speak to that.

So Holly, do you want to speak a little bit to some of the things, other things that were done on training? Also, if you want to jump up and add some pieces, it'd be great. Thank you.

Absolutely. So one of the things that we are doing and have been doing since the administration changed hands was tracking the executive orders that are coming down, evaluating whether they have an impact on schools, whether they have an impact in Washington State.

We also have a group of folks that have been meeting for quite a while to make sure that we are on top of everything that may be changing. That group, we did a training last week-- twice-- for principals and office managers, talking about what we're doing to be prepared and talking about a couple of things specifically.

I want to name that we have Policy 4300, which is limiting immigration enforcement in schools. I think Jurnee left, but we have the policy that she is talking about around limiting immigration enforcement. That policy is based on a law in Washington State that creates Washington as a sanctuary state, and specifically directs local law enforcement to not collaborate with federal immigration authorities if they're doing immigration work, and specifically calls out that schools are safe places.

So as part of our training for schools, we talked to them about what the policy requirements are if someone does come onto campus seeking to do immigration enforcement. And it's getting their information, getting a copy of any order that they may have, and then sending that on to the superintendent's office so that, as Jurnee mentioned, they talk about it in Seattle.

We will be reviewing those, seeking outside legal counsel as necessary, in providing support for schools to ensure that our schools are complying with the law and that we're treating everyone on our campuses in a safe, respectful manner. And I think that those trainings have been very well received. Do you want to add anything?

Yes, so as Holly mentioned, good evening. As Holly mentioned, a group of us have been meeting for some months in anticipation of what might come and how it might impact our students and our staff and families. And so, in addition to what Holly Ferguson mentioned this evening, we've also curated resources for our staff to be able to support our students.

Many of us were around during the last administration where these things were implemented, and we saw the impacts it had on our students, their social, emotional-- the impact on their social emotional well-being and how that interfered with their learning. Regardless of their status, knowing and understanding that, by virtue of what they look like, they may be targeted outside in their community, and, in some cases, by peers in the school community. So we provided resources to ensure that our staff have what they need to be able to support our students, as they might be impacted and their students.

Jurnee Robinson spoke tonight about the stress and anxiety some of these words are causing to our students. And so we've gathered those resources. And we've also been in collaboration with many of our community partners to make sure they understand our policy, our position so we can wrap around and support our students together.

Great. Thank you so much. Just want to give a quick update to our community, to the board. Appreciate that. And that concludes my Superintendent Update tonight. Thank you, President Van.

Thank you, Dr. Duran. Moving to our school board reports, legislative reports. Director Tidholm, Director Petrini.

Thank you, Holly and Kisa. So Highline testified in support of Senate Bill 5189 around full funding for competency and mastery-based education. This bill would support several of our schools currently and potentially more, as more schools explore competency learning. This bill is one of our five legislative priorities, and we're hopeful that it will move forward.

Today, the Senate also heard from our superintendent on four bills-- long day in Olympia for him-- that are critical to Highline and are part of the big three on our legislative agenda-- 5187 on transportation, 5192 on MSOCs, and 5263, as well as 5307, both on special education. These bills start to get to our chronic overfunding-- underfunding. I wish we were overfunded. And we ask that the legislature act on them promptly, as we are beginning our budget process.

We're also watching House Bill 1122, which would require policy around cell phone use in schools. I know my babies are not very happy with me, but I am a huge advocate. I survived not having a cell phone in school. And we want to encourage any policy requirements allow those individual needs to be taken into consideration. And that is all that I have at the moment.

If I could just add, a week ago, I was able to attend the legislative conference and Day on the Hill with WSA, WSSDA, and WSBO. It was a great conference over at the SeaTac Hilton. And they had different breakout sessions of different ways to advocate, different ways to strategize, and how to work with our state senators and legislators and advocate for these items and why and how we can go about advocating for those.

One of one of the key takeaways that I enjoyed so much was that the keynote speaker, Tami Pyfer, she's a state senator out of Utah, where I'm from. And that was something I didn't know.

And she talked about the dignity index. She's the author of the dignity index. And we had a great time going through different things that people say, and where would that line up, kind of on this scale of 1 to 8, and how we would kind of rate different things that are said and how that would bring down dignity in people or lift up dignity. And so just in reading these, I just thought this was a great example or exercise that perhaps we as a board could engage in. I think it would be great for us to continue to see where are we on this? How can we continue to collaborate so that we can bring dignity to every aspect of our school district and in our conversations and actions? And so I just really appreciated that.

Thank you both for that update. Next up is going to be our Director's Reports. And I'm going to start with Director Alvarez first.

Thank you, President Van. To start with, there's a couple things I want to-- there's the financial aid opportunities. So financial aid helps students explore their post-secondary pathways. The Western College Grant provides generous financial aid for students whose families earned up to $131,000. Completing a FAFSA or WASFA automatically qualifies those eligible for the Washington College Grant. And help for students is available at upcoming financial aid sessions in January and February, and we encourage students to reach out to their school's college and career specialists or counselors for session dates or assistance.

I also wanted to throw in a plug for PSSC, the Class Act. It's opening back up. It's a restaurant at Puget Sound Skills Center. We'll begin taking reservations by the end of the week for the first week of February.

This is a restaurant run by PSSC students in the Culinary Arts and Science program. I'm a proud parent. My youngest actually attended the culinary arts program there. She was banned at our house, because all she wanted to do-- she didn't want to cook. All she wanted to do was cook desserts. It was like, no, you've got to cook dinner, and then you could cook desserts. But no. So she was banned from cooking at the house, because she only wanted to cook desserts. And no, that wasn't--

But it was an amazing opportunity for us. We actually went to-- I would have meetings there. I would invite some of my colleagues, and we would go have meetings there. And I really appreciate it, because we would support but also have lunch. So it's a great opportunity to support our PSSC Culinary Arts program there. So I encourage you to visit the PSSC website to check out the menu and make your reservations. It's a great program.

And I also wanted to just reiterate the joint message that went out, a call to stand together. As Dr. Martin Luther King just reminded us, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. So let us stand united in our commitment to creating schools where every student and staff member is welcomed, valued, and safe. Together, as a community, we will continue to build a culture of justice, empathy, and belonging.

During these hard times right now, we heard students. We heard community members come. Unless you've experienced it-- many of us have gone through it. Many of us lived by the border. Many of us grew up experiencing what fear does to us in school.

It prevents us from learning. It prevents us from really creating that community that we all learn-- you know, just want. People come up here, and we don't all have the same experiences. And just what you want for your kids, that's what we all want for all our students. So I encourage you to-- it's just a reminder, just what Dr. Martin Luther King told us. You know, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. So with that, that concludes my report. Thank you, President Van.

Thank you, Director Alvarez. Next up is Director Petrini.

Getting around. OK, Thank you.

I first would like to acknowledge the absence of Director Hagos. I want to acknowledge the tremendous work ethic, ethics, dignity, and tenacity I have witnessed in Director Azeb Hagos. She truly was a woman who put her heart, and strength, and courage, and vivacious mindset into everything that she did to better the educational system for our students.

And she did that through her input, her advocacy, through well-thought-out policies, sound practices, and governance, academic experiences, mental health and wellness focused, championing and lifting up others wherever she is, and in supporting and tending everything possible, and sharing and celebrating with others in all capacities. I have great deep admiration and respect for Director Hagos, and our district, I believe, was better off because of her hard work and her soft heart. I am sad to see her resign

And in that vein, it makes me reflect on a lot of the things and the reasons why I decided to run for school board and some of the meaningful experiences I've been able to engage in this year, as I continue to encourage and fight for more intense focus on foundational literacy skills, demanding more robust goals towards grade level proficiency, demanding more transparency around our actions and policies, advocating for parents to be involved and aware more, advocating for students and equal academic opportunities, and promoting our community programs and partners, and supporting our teachers who have strived and sacrificed so much for our kids to have competitive compensation and to have positive working environments that allow them to do the things that they're here to do, and that is to teach.

But my experience has also been a discouraging and frustrating one. There are many things that frustrate me.

When it comes to academics. I worry about how much we are so hyper focused and double down on things that have not produced the promised outcomes of increased academic performance in all our students. I hear from teachers, again and again, that they're not able to teach to the levels that they should be, as we have 50% of our kids three grades below.

I'm saddened as we claim to close opportunity gaps, and at times it comes by way of eliminating opportunities altogether that had the greatest impact. Or like watering things down, like HiCap programs, pushing away and distancing a 20-year plus relationship with our robotics clubs and programs, not investing more in reading programs and supports that have proven efficacy and several years worth of positive growth that would lead to all areas of academics being lifted, and behavioral issues would be diminished.

I know Highline prides itself on being a place where we strive to make sure everyone feels like they belong. However, I have not felt that myself, along with many others who have shared their stories and experiences, and when relayed, they are turned away and disregarded.

I struggle with the constant stifling of open and honest support discussions, or the avoidance and lack of communication from leadership, undermining efforts and actions, mistrust and independent decision making, or the hostile and toxic and undignified attacks, both over the dais and behind the scenes.

I feel my words have often been twisted and have had bad and nefarious intentions attached and implied. I've also heard of defamatory reports of those in leadership and on this board, calling me names, spreading rumors and lies, while telling others not to work with me. Such examples-- a white supremacist, a Moms for Liberty, a Christianized fascist, a racist, a xenophobe-- pretty much all the phobes at this point-- in places that are of their work or community and because I ask questions.

There's also reports from teachers telling me that they were told by their Union Teamsters via the district that I was dangerous and would hurt children, a narrative that has been corroborated by several teachers at this point, while also telling others not to work with me, not to answer my questions, among the many, many other ridiculous things I have heard, down to someone video recording myself and another board member at an airport after a conference.

And I know I signed up for this scrutiny, and I accept it. But a culture of belonging doesn't quite fit the experience I've had of pure contempt.

I have worries about the way our community and parents have been treated, while creating a wedge of distrust between parents, children and teachers, pushing identity over integrity, orientation over honesty, diversity over dignity, equity over equality, and political activism over academics. I have seen it all.

And I've complained, and I've cautioned, and I have strived to encourage dialogue and discussion and understanding. But I have been met with disdain, distrust and distance.

Most concerning, though, is the lack of accountability for actions and inactions when clear violations have been brought to the attention. I've complained of several state and now proven federal violations regarding student and parent information and communication not handled appropriately, among other things.

As I've strived to come to the table and advocate for all sides, bringing balance and perspectives that should help shape what families hope to see their school district reflect, I feel that independent voices like mine are not valued. They're minimized and discriminated against. And because I see no friendly path forward, I am also officially resigning as of this moment, which brings me much sadness.

But I've appreciated the few souls who have given me their time, reflecting and engaging in meaningful conversations, and treated me with dignity. I hope you know who you are and how much I appreciate you.

So thank you to my constituents, to our community, to my board, to the superintendent, and to our parents and teachers who are still in the fight for balance and common sense. Please accept my apologies as I continue to work hard in other capacities and efforts to invite people back to the table. I will excuse myself now.

Thank you, Director Petrini.

[APPLAUSE]

Next up, can I please-- I want to pull a-- I'm going to request a recess for about five minutes.

[INAUDIBLE]

OK, thank you.

[SIDE CONVERSATIONS]

Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Nice meeting you.

Hey, it was a delight.

Wonderful day.

Thank you.

She was talking about the [INAUDIBLE].

I know. And I was thinking there's some-- I don't know you well, but I'm going to say-- something you don't know, and you never will.

You're never going to know what it's like when you're not there. I know, I know, I know.

Yeah.

Those people that just met you now that-- you'll never know that.

I'm going to take credit for that.

Yeah. Keep doing it.

I'm not going to take credit for that.

[SIDE CONVERSATION]

[LAUGHTER]

[SIDE CONVERSATION]

Love it. That's good [INAUDIBLE].

Hey, you, too.

[SIDE CONVERSATIONS]

Well, thank you everybody. Just reconvening back from our recess. We're going to continue on with our board directors comments. Director Tidholm, you're up.

The community is invited to Noche de Mariachi tomorrow, Thursday, January 23, at 6:00 PM. My baby will be performing, also super excited. It's at the Highline Performing Arts Center. This event showcases talented student mariachi groups from Cascade Middle School, Evergreen High School, and Highline High Schools.

There's also going to be vendors available. My baby's very excited. There will be tamales, although he said they're not going to be as good as Angelica's. And that's going to start at 6:00 PM, and then the music will start at 6:30. Hope to see you all there.

Also attended the Governors Ball last week, great event. Being legislative liaison, you know, it's important to network with our elected officials and maintain those relationships. So it was a good opportunity to mingle with the crowd in Olympia and discuss some of our priorities for this year. And that is all that I have.

Thank you so much, Director Tidholm. Just to give everybody a quick notice, I need an update to share with everybody. I've received a written letter of resignation from Director Petrini. Per policy 1114, upon receipt of director's written resignation, the board shall discuss the resignation at the regularly scheduled meeting, which is happening right now. The receipt of this resignation is effective immediately. I want to thank Director Petrini for her service as a school board member and wish her the best moving forward.

If you live in District 4 and are interested in this position, we'll be also publicly sharing more information about this process for filling the vacancy. Thank you.

I'll move to my director's report. If you haven't seen it, our Annual Report is on our website. Our redesigned 23-24 Annual Report is now live on our mobile friendly, easy website. Discover inspiring stories of students and staff, explore the strategic plan, and the dashboard to track progress towards our goals. Check out the report to celebrate the achievements, review growth and opportunities, and see high promise in action.

As you guys all know, this is one of the best times for me, one of the best holidays for me, as we celebrate Lunar New Year next week. I am hoping that you will all be able to go and celebrate at our various events at our schools and in our community.

This year is the Year of the Snake. It is a symbol that holds significance in very many cultures. The snake is a symbol of transformation, wisdom, and renewal. One of the most important things about the snake is the ability to shed its skin. By shedding the old, it makes space for new growth and new opportunities. It is a reminder that we, too, have the power to shed what holds us back and embrace new beginnings.

Here in Highline, we are a community built on support, growth, and learning from one and another. Just like the snake, we all look at the new year as an opportunity to leave everything behind that no longer serves us, whether it's a challenge we've been facing, a fear that holds us back, or even a habit that we want to change. For me, it's my weight-- and a step forward with a fresh mindset. This is a time for us to think about what we can let go so we can grow stronger and more resilient as individuals in the community.

As we celebrate this special time, let's embrace the spirit of the transformation that the year of the snake brings. Let's support each other, shed the old, and make space for growth. Together, we can make this year one of opportunity, learning, and positive change. So I just want to wish everybody [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. So thank you so much, and have a wonderful Lunar New Year.

With that, that concludes my director's report, and we're going to move on to our consent agenda. Can I please have a motion to approve our consent agenda?

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

I'll second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Any opposed? None, thank you.

There were no items removed from the consent agenda, so we're going to move to our action item. 8.1 was removed from consideration, so we're going to move to 8.2. This is motion to approve new board policy 3206, Pregnant and Parenting Students. Any questions or comments?

No, none.

Can I please have a motion?

I move that the Highline School Board approve new board policy 3206, Pregnant and Parenting Students.

I'll second.

Roll call, please.

Director Tidholm.

Yay.

Director Alvarez.

Yay.

President Van.

Yay.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you. 8.3-- this is motion to approve new board policy 5404, Family, Medical, and Maternity Leave. Any questions or comments on this? Here and seeing none, can I please have a motion?

I move the Highline School Board approve Policy 5404, Family Medical and Maternity Leave.

I'll second that.

Roll call, please.

Director Alvarez.

Yay.

Director Tidholm.

Yay.

President Van.

Yay.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you.

And it looks like we have two introduction items. 10.1-- this is motion to approve revisions to board policy 6000, Financial Management for Equity. Any questions or comments on this one?

Do we have a presentation or anything on it?

We have no presentations. And this was from our--

Yeah. Yeah.

Seeing none, so 10.2, motion to approve Evergreen High School replacement project, approval of contractor Cornerstone General Contractors. Change order number two on purchase order number CP240080-- any questions or comments?

We do have a presentation for this one.

Jackie Bryant, Chief Financial Officer, will be coming up.

OK. I just want to give a brief update on the Evergreen progress. This is a result of the vandalism that occurred about a year ago.

So this additional amount is to continue the remediation on those damaged classrooms. Unfortunately, as our contractors got in there and started pulling up the concrete that we talked about a few months ago, they discovered additional damage to other classrooms. So it's the same damage, it's just more of it.

And so we have received the go ahead from our insurance to continue the work. We will we continue to pull up that concrete and do all the remediation that we need to. So that's what this change order is for.

Currently, we are still on time and on schedule, set to open in August. Part of this amount is speeding up the contractors, so allowing them to work extra shifts and bring in additional help to complete the job. Happy to take questions.

I do have a question. So you stated that our insurance company has approved for us to move forward with that. They are accepting some liability or responsibility in regards to that?

Yes, and we continue to work with them. So we have a weekly call with the insurance carrier, the adjusters. There's multiple adjusters on this claim, because it's a large claim. And our insurance representatives and the capital team and myself, we are working through. As you can imagine, with such a large claim, there's a lot of work to be done and negotiations.

We do expect them to cover the majority of the remediation work. Anything that is not covered by insurance we have contingency built into the budget. So we definitely have the capacity for the amount that's not going to be covered by insurance.

Thank you very much. If there's anything else, I'll ask during our capital oversight team meeting.

Great.

Any other questions, directors?

No, I think you answered. I was like, OK, what is our portion? But we already have some contingency saved up for it.

OK.

That was it.

OK. Thank you.

Thank you very much. That concludes our intro items. Any items that you'd like to add to our consent agenda? OK. I and see none. I'm going to ask for a motion to adjourn.

I'll make a motion we adjourn.

I'll second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Any opposed? Hearing none, thank you.