

Highline Public Schools | School Board Regular Meeting - March 5, 2025

Well, good evening, everybody. Welcome to our regular scheduled board meeting. We're going to 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.

Thank you. Roll call, please.

Director Alvarez.

Here.

Director Tidholm.

[AUDIO OUT]

Director Tidholm, can you try that again, please?

Present.

President Van.

Here. And to the left here is our superintendent, Dr. Ivan Duran. Any calls for changes or additions to our board meeting agenda tonight? OK. I hear and see none. Welcome, everybody. We have quite a few recognitions this evening. So, Erica, can I please have Eleanor to come on up and we'll read a proclamation?

[APPLAUSE]

And if we have any others, come on up. Just right at the podium there.

Do we sing a song?

[LAUGHTER]

Only if it's a song and dance.

Sorry.

Go ahead.

So whereas, the citizens of Highline Public Schools stand firmly committed to promoting reading as the catalyst for our students' future academic success, their preparation for America's jobs of the future, and their ability to compete in a global economy. And whereas, Highline Public Schools has provided [INAUDIBLE] leadership in the area of community involvement in the education of our youth [AUDIO OUT] investment is the key to the community's wellbeing and long-term quality of life.

As the National Education Association Read Across America, [AUDIO OUT] 2025 puts reading and adult [AUDIO OUT]. Therefore, the board and the superintendent of Highline Public Schools call on the citizens of Highline Public Schools to assure that every child a safe place, reading together with a caring adult, [AUDIO OUT] that this district enthusiastically endorses National Education Association's Read Across America and recommits our community to engage in programs and activities to make America's children the best readers in the world. Congratulations.

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

So--

Do we give them--

--would you like to say something and then come up for pictures?

Well, we did get some money from the HEA. And so we spent it on getting ebooks to add to our catalog, which is becoming beefier every year that this happens. So we thank HEA and Read Across America for that.

Aww.

Thank you so much. Come on up.

So come on up.

[APPLAUSE]

[APPLAUSE]

Our next recognition is Schools Retirees Appreciation Week. Can I please have Debbie come on up? Debbie Strayer. She's--

[APPLAUSE]

She may be retired, but

[AUDIO OUT] everywhere within our community still. So I appreciate that. Well, Debbie, whereas, Highline Public Schools and Washington State Board Retirees Association recognize educators who have retired from active teaching, administration, or a specialized field of the teaching profession. And whereas, Highline Public Schools and the Washington State Schools Retirees Association educate and assist retirees in meeting the special challenges they face after retiring and improving their general welfare.

And whereas, Highline Public Schools aids in advancing [AUDIO OUT] standards of education, and thereby strengthens the status of teaching profession. And whereas, Highline Public Schools promotes group and individual involvement in charitable projects and activities, and maintains interest and participation in educational and community activities.

And whereas, Highline Public Schools supports and encourages retired educators to remain active in the education profession through volunteer activities associated with learning. Now, therefore, the board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby proclaim March 17 through the 23rd as Schools Retirees Appreciation Week in Highline Public Schools and urge all citizens to join in this special observance. Can we get around of applause?

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

Would you like to say anything, Debbie?

Well, I would just like to thank the Highline School District. For those of you that don't know, I started in the Highline School District in 1959 at the kindergarten at Sunnysdale, that my dad helped build because they built it then. And I've continued to work and enjoy all of the aspects of the school district.

Right now, I'm on the Highline Foundation Board. And I work athletics. Track starts on the 20th. And I get to go in all sorts of classrooms and see the wonderful things that are going on, the growth of some students that I see year after year, especially when I do special ed classes. And so I just want to say we're doing [AUDIO OUT] school district's doing great things. And thank you.

Thank you so much.

[APPLAUSE]

And if there are any other [AUDIO OUT].

[INAUDIBLE]

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

[CHATTER]

[APPLAUSE]

Our next recognition is our Social Workers Week. I please have Val Allen and team come on up.

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

This is great. And then Director Tidholm's going to read the recognition.

Whereas, school social workers and Highline Public Schools [AUDIO OUT] playing a central role in creating a positive school climate and partnerships between home, school, and community to ensure student academic success. And whereas, school social workers support the educational, social, and emotional development of all students by decreasing the impact of barriers to academic success.

And whereas, school social workers participate in the developmental global citizens-- development, I'm sorry, of global citizens by promoting skills for a lifetime and lifelong learning. And whereas, school social [AUDIO OUT] challenges, such as mental [AUDIO OUT] health, behavioral difficulties, disabilities, crisis response, poverty, bullying, abuse, grief, addiction, et cetera, to enable students to achieve academic goals, and school social workers provide school developmental training and consultation to school staff and family members on topics impacting students' ability to learn.

And whereas, school social workers assist families in accessing resources to improve their circumstances and the readiness to learn foundation for their children. And whereas, it is fitting that school social workers be recognized for the important role they play in the lives and education of students and their families. Now, therefore, the board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby proclaim that March 2 to 8, 2025, is National School Social Work Week in Highline and urge students to join us in honoring and recognizing the dedication and hard work of all school social workers.

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

So I am honored to work with a group of social workers in my department. And there are a total of 18 of us that are in other departments, whether it's our boss, to our enrollment director, to our community partnership manager. So I'm honored to their hard working, and they're little rebels. And they get the work done.

All right. Come on up. We're going to take a picture.

[APPLAUSE]

[CHATTER]

[APPLAUSE]

OK, we have our last recognition, which is Education Support Professional Week here. Can I please have [INAUDIBLE] Booker and Martha come on up, please.

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

Yeah. Yeah. So I just want to share that this recognition also includes our 180-plus custodians and maintenance workers, nearly 700 paraeducators, our nutritional services team, transportation, community safety, family engagement, human resources, communications, and admin support teams. So this is a huge group. I'm going to read the proclamation here.

Whereas, educational support professionals are involved in nearly every aspect of education, maintaining buildings and grounds, prepping and serving meals, keeping school facilities clean and orderly, assisting in the classroom, providing information technology services, administrative support functions, safe transportation, a secure and healthy environment, and many other specialized services.

And whereas, these dedicated individuals deserve recognition and thanks for the outstanding work they are doing in their communities and for the children enrolled in Highline Public Schools. And whereas, there are 1,754 education support professionals working with and helping children enrolled in Highline schools. And whereas, education support professionals are instrumental in fulfilling the district's paramount duty to prepare all students for the future they choose.

And whereas, by supporting the learning environment, education support professionals are crucial partners with teachers, parents, and administrators in our public schools. Now, therefore, the board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby proclaim March 10 through the 14th, 2025, as Education Support Professional Week and urge citizens to join us in honoring and recognizing the dedication and hard work of all education support professionals. Thank you so much.

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

Thank you, everyone. Good evening. So I just want to say, on behalf of all classified staff, sometimes our work can go unseen. So this is an honor. We appreciate this. And we are the backbone of the district, OK? So thank you all, board and superintendent.

Thank you so much.

On behalf of the executive assistants, thank you for this recognition. We want to recognize each of the EAs for some of their unique duties. Sharon, for creating the employee work calendars. [INAUDIBLE], for scheduling RAM and budget meetings. Marta, for the POs for graduation Gina, for supporting professional development for our teachers. Jenny, for processing school field trips.

Adriana, for supporting the superintendent. [INAUDIBLE] the POs for our school community partners. Marissa, organizing the Leadership Forum meetings. And Heather, for purchasing digital tools, software, and devices. Thank you for all of your hard work, problem solving, and the little things we do that often go unnoticed. This is an amazing group to be a part of. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you so much. You're awesome. So if we have any classified staff, come on up. We're going to take some pictures.

Let's do it.

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

OK. I'm going to invite Mr. Gil Parsons to come on up. We have a school presentation with Highline Virtual Academy.

All right. Good evening, President Van. Vice President Tidholm, Director Alvarez, Dr. Duran, our superintendent. It is my distinct honor. I'm just really proud right now because I believe this presentation that you're about to hear is really the future of education. for a lot of our students. This school is going to present tonight is, I believe, a jewel. And I'm so proud to work alongside this principal. What I would like for you to do is welcome up to this podium Principal Amy Carlson and her team [AUDIO OUT] tonight. Thank you.

[CHEERING, APPLAUSE]

Good evening, President Van, [AUDIO OUT], Director Alvarez, and Dr. Duran. My name is Amy Carlson, as Gil mentioned. And I am the proud principal of Highline Virtual Academy. As a school, we continue to be intentional in living our Highline promise-- ensuring we know all students by name, strength, and need, and supporting them in graduating and preparing for the future they choose. At HVA, we support all of our district's big goals. Tonight, we will specifically focus on culture of belonging and our work around innovative learning. I would like to introduce to you Miss Keishanna Russell, HVA's amazing school counselor.

[APPLAUSE]

Hi, everyone. I want to start by sharing about our amazing students. HVA reflects the diversity in our district, serving multilanguage learners across 24 languages, students in special education, and those in the district's Homebound program, ensuring all students have access to learning. I also want to share insights about our dynamic enrollment trends we see throughout the year.

So starting with our demographics, I'm going to highlight our Hispanic and Latino community that make up 45% of our student body. 29% of our students qualify for multilingual support, with 24 being Spanish speakers, and 14% of students receiving special education services. So as you can see, we serve a diverse student body with a range of strengths and needs.

We experience a significant number of students transitioning into our academic models each year. Currently, we serve 249 students, with 53 students supported in our independent model. Since the start of this school year, 74 students have enrolled. And enrollment continues. To deliver on our promise of a culture of belonging and knowing students by name, strength, and need, we have implemented a strong, multi-tiered system of support.

At the tier one level, we have implemented schoolwide expectations supported by our PBIS team using the acronym CARE, which stands for Compassionate, Adaptive, Responsible and Engaged. Our tier two supports are identified using various data points. And interventions are implemented, such as check in/check out and small groups. Tier three interventions include one-on-one support with teachers, counselors, social workers, as well as partnering with families.

At HVA, we work intentionally to build a strong culture of belonging beyond the digital space. To do so, we start every morning with structured support advisory. In addition, each student has a required weekly one-on-one check in with their advisory teacher, which builds strong rapport and provides individualized support.

We start each school year and quarter with strong start days, which are required in-person sessions, and offer in-person Fridays, providing students an opportunity to connect with teachers and their peers face to face. These efforts have significantly increased students' sense of belonging, as seen in our panorama wellbeing survey, where 71% of students felt a sense of belonging at HVA, an 18% increase from last spring.

We also empower student voice through leadership courses and in Associate Student Body, ASB. This work contributed to a 10% increase in our equity panorama survey, with 79% of students feeling their voices are valued. We are proud of the intentional and inclusive, supportive community we have built and continue to work to strengthen it. I want to introduce Calvin Allan, one of our amazing teachers.

[APPLAUSE]

Good evening. HVA was born out of the pandemic, a time where we had to reimagine learning. I'm happy to report we have continued that innovative learning in partnership with students and families. At HVA, most students follow a blended model, receiving live instruction from certified teachers via Microsoft Teams and completing asynchronous work during independent work time.

There's also the self-directed pathway, where students attend advisory sessions daily and check in with teachers during content classes on Monday. For the rest of the week, they pace their own learning through Canvas, our instructional platform. A third pathway is the independent model, where students attend advisory asynchronously and use ingenuity as their instructional platform. They check in weekly with a certified teacher for progress monitoring, guidance, and support as needed. We are excited today to have three student speakers to share their experiences with the pathways at HVA. Our first student speaker is Camila Reyes Pedroso.

[APPLAUSE]

Good evening. My name is Camila Reyes Pedroso. I am a student at HVA. And I am currently in the blended model. I am here today to share how HVA has impacted me. I moved from Florida three years ago, and I started in a public high school. I was not doing well academically or mentally. And I was struggling with behavioral issues. I was constantly skipping school.

Originally, I was not planning to come to HVA. I had applied to other schools with similar programs. But I heard about this school and decided to apply as well. I got accepted and was unsure, but ended up accepting. I believe now that that is the best decision I could have made for myself. Being a student in the blended model has helped me overcome the challenges I faced previously.

I have learned to manage my own schedule and take ownership of my education. I am able to learn in an environment where I feel safe enough to ask questions. And most importantly, I feel comfortable enough with my teachers and counselors to ask for help. HVA has allowed me to strive academically. I can work with my teachers one on one to get my grades up.

With that being said, I would have never imagined three years ago that I would be able to do something like this, to have an involvement in my school or to enjoy learning. I saw myself as a lost cause before I found this school. And I believe my teachers, the friends I have made, [INAUDIBLE] this school has brought to me have helped me realize that I have so much more potential and so much more to give than what I saw in myself prior. While I have grown in many ways, I know there is still plenty to improve. But my school has taught me that it is OK to ask for help, that it is OK to try new things, and that it is OK to advocate for yourself. Thank you for having me.

[APPLAUSE]

I'd like to introduce [INAUDIBLE] Daniel.

[APPLAUSE]

Good evening, everyone. My name is [INAUDIBLE] Daniel. And I'm a self-directed 10th grader at Highline Virtual Academy. I've actually been a self-directed student since seventh grade. So I've had a lot of experience with this type of education. And I can confidently say that it has been a great fit for me. This model has allowed me to take control of my education, manage my time effectively, and work at a pace that best suits me. I thrive in an environment where I can work independently. And the flexibility of this model helps me structure my day in a way that maximizes my productivity.

One of the things I appreciate most is that while I have the freedom to learn in a way that works best for me, I still have access to support whenever I need it. For example, if I had a question while doing chemistry, I can send an email or join the synchronous class for that day to ask my question. But having said all that, the self-directed model is not for everyone. And by that, I mean it is meant for students who will hold themselves accountable and actually get work done.

The self-directed model is an excellent fit for students who are self-motivated, responsible, and prefer a more independent approach to learning. Overall, being self-directed since seventh grade has helped me grow not just academically, but also in valuable life skills, like time management, self-discipline, and accountability. I'm really glad that Highline Virtual Academy offers this option because it provides a great alternative for students who learn best in a more independent setting. Thank you for your time.

[APPLAUSE]

Sophia was unable to be here tonight. Her family is honoring Ramadan. But she wanted to share this video with you. She is a student in our independent model.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- My name is Sophia. And I'm an 11th grader in the independent model at HVA. My sister and I were one of the first people among the independent model since the fall of 2023. The independent model has been beneficial for me in many ways. One of its standout features is the flexibility it offers, making it ideal for students with busy schedules or those who prefer to have more control over how they study at home.

This model encourages self-discipline and helps students develop strong organization skills as we manage our own work. However, it also provides a strong support system, ensuring that you're not left to figure out everything on your own. For instance, whenever I struggled with a particular subject or found myself falling behind, my teachers were always there to offer guidance and assistance.

In particular, my advisor has been extremely patient and supportive throughout my entire experience within the independent model, offering consistent encouragement and help. The weekly check-ins and in-person visits on Fridays have also been incredibly valuable. These interactions provide a needed change of pace and environment, allowing me to connect directly with my teachers and stay on track.

Ms. Grieshaber has always been there to support me with math whenever I needed help. And Ms. Stein Ross has provided support with problem solving whenever my assignments or courses became challenging. She's offered constructive feedback and even provided templates for my slides, making the process more manageable, effective, and approachable. Overall, the balance of independence and support has made this learning model a great fit for me.

[END PLAYBACK]

[APPLAUSE]

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- Hello. My name is Sophia. And I'm an 11th grader in--

[END PLAYBACK]

As we continue to grow as a school and learn from our students, we remain committed to enhancing project-based learning opportunities and fostering meaningful community partnerships. We are also focused on strengthening system-wide interventions for literacy and math to support academic success. Thank you for your time.

[APPLAUSE]

Well, thank you so much. I'm going to open this up for directors for any questions or comments. I'm going to start with Director Alvarez.

Just thank you, thank you. Beautiful presentation. And just a thank you for coming to the students. Your voice is important to hear directly from you, how this impacts you, and for being brave and coming and speaking in front of all these people. So thank you for being here tonight.

[APPLAUSE]

Director Tidholm.

No questions. But I'll also ditto that. Thank you, everybody, for coming to present, and especially for the students. I know even for adults, it can be scary to get up and speak in front of all these people. So I really appreciate you coming out here and showing your vulnerability and sharing your stories because, as Director Alvarez said, it's really important to hear from our students as well. And thank you for the presentation as well from the school.

[APPLAUSE]

Well, thank you so much for coming tonight. The student testimony was impressive. Camila, [INAUDIBLE], and Sophia, just awesome. So this next question, with their testimony has probably already told a story, but can you share with us, Amy, in regards to the increase in student enrollment in HVA? Because that's huge, 74 since the beginning of the year. And year over year, I'm seeing an increase. So there's something that is working here in regards to the blended models, to the self-directed, to the independent. So how is that all working? And how are you getting more kids?

Yeah, that's a great question. I think that HVA plays an important role in our district and how we think about supporting students across all of our middle schools and high schools. As we know, students might need different things at different times in their lives. And HVA has been that for them. Throughout the year, we get a variety of different needs and reasons why students are looking for a different model, a different way to navigate their school career. And they find HVA.

And so I think it has just been that, that we've just been a part of this big puzzle and thinking about, how are we supporting students across the district? And it really is a continual enrollment through, especially we see around the new quarter or the semester. We're just meeting a variety of different needs from all of our schools.

Thank you so much. Appreciate it. Can we get them another round of applause?

[APPLAUSE]

OK, we're going to move on to our scheduled communications here. On behalf of the board, we sincerely appreciate you taking the time to join us and share your thoughts this evening. 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 that while the board is unable to respond directly to your testimony during the meeting, we value your input. Thank you once again for being here and speaking with us. First up is Bobbi Giammona.

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

All right, good evening to the school board directors, members, Dr. Duran. My name is Bobbi Giammona, longtime community member and longtime Highline staff member, here to say thank you for the proposed Resolution 02-25. A Stand for Every Student is a stand for all of humanity. I could not be more proud that this is on the table as a discussion. We are a district that prides itself in welcoming people from all walks of life. Whatever their situation, their story, we are here to support. I am ceding the remainder of my time to my colleague, Tilly Phoenix.

Hello. Good evening. I am both a staff member in Highline and a proud parent of a transgender student in the district. I'm here tonight to voice my strong support for Resolution 02-25 because safe and welcoming schools are not just ideals, they are a necessity. Every student deserves to walk into their classroom knowing they belong, that they are protected, and that their identity is valued.

As a trans, nonbinary educator and parent, I see firsthand how critical it is for our policies to reflect our commitment to equity and safety. This resolution is always important, but it is especially urgent now. We are living in a time when the federal government is actively rolling back protections for LGBTQIA2S+ individuals and immigrants, restricting rights and passing policies that make schools less safe for marginalized students.

In the face of these unjust and dangerous laws, we must take a stand at the local level. Highline has the power to show our students and staff that they are protected, regardless of what happens nationally. We know that when students feel safe and supported, they thrive. When they don't, the impact on their mental health, academic success, and overall wellbeing is devastating.

It is our responsibility as educators, leaders, and community members to ensure that every child, no matter their race, gender identity, religion, or immigration status, has a place in our schools where they are affirmed and uplifted. Passing this resolution is a statement Highline will not stand by while discrimination, bullying, or harassment threatens the safety of our students and staff. Instead, we will lead with courage and compassion. I urge you to approve this resolution and continue making Highline a district where all students and staff, including LGBTQIA2S+ individuals--

[MUTED]

[CHEERING, APPLAUSE]

Next up, can I please have Elizabeth Maine?

[APPLAUSE]

Good evening. My name is Elizabeth Maine. And I am the proud principal of Seahurst Elementary, just up the street. I am also here tonight to share my support for School Board Resolution 02-25-- Our Schools, Our Promise, A Stand for Every Student. I am so grateful to be a leader in a school district that is steadfast in its commitment to each and every student, and to creating a culture of belonging for all students, no matter their gender identity, sexual orientation, religious faith, immigration status, or race.

In support of a Stand for Every Student, I wanted to share some words that are not just my own, but those of our brilliant Seahurst students. Last Friday, we held our second annual Martin Luther King Legacy March. During this march, Seahurst students made signs to represent our beliefs aligned with five legacies of Dr. King-- identity, community, diversity, celebration, and justice.

Here are some of our students' words. "Pride," with a rainbow in the background. "LGBTQIA love." "Women's rights matter." "Black Lives Matter." "Be kind. Be nice. Be hopeful." I liked that one. "Justice for everyone." "Treat people by their personality, not their race." And "Immigration matters. They are human. They matter." These words represent a diverse community of learners who are so grateful to have the support of our school board. Thank you for supporting this resolution and your commitment to us.

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

Thank you. Next up, can I have Lyon Terry?

Good evening, President Van, board of directors, Superintendent Duran. Thank you for your service to our students, families, and the community. I'm here to speak in favor of Resolution 02-25 and to stand for our children, as you are. I am so fortunate to serve as the principal of Midway Elementary Dual Language School. And I talked about the awesomeness of Midway a couple of weeks ago.

Today, I'd like to talk about how fortunate our students are to grow up in this diverse and accepting community. First, a bit about me before I tell my story. I grew up in rural Maine. As privileged as I was, and I was very privileged, I didn't understand the world or the diversity of our people. I had no friends of color until I went to a private high school out of state. Yes, I'm that privileged. And my closest high school friend didn't even come out of the closet until after college.

As do most people, I only understood my perspective and my background. And our kids are the same. I'm going to tell you a story from my daughter's fourth grade year. Years ago, she had a student in her class named Helen, not her real name, who was a fourth grader just down the hall from where I was teaching fourth grade at the time. And one day, Helen revealed to her parents and her teacher that she identified more as a boy than a girl, and would now transition to the name Henry, not his real name.

Henry's teacher alerted the administration. And as a school, we worked with the family on messaging strategy for the students. And after many meetings among the adults in the school, the teacher held a class meeting. Henry introduced himself again to his classmates and my daughter and explained that he identified more as a boy than a girl and wanted now to be called Henry.

So that night at the dinner table, I asked my daughter, so how was school? Any big news? She talked about recess. Well, what about Helen changing to Henry? Oh, yeah, that's nothing big. He can be who he wants to be. The kids know who they are. Our kids at Midway and throughout our community accept others for who they are. They just need us, the adults, to protect and support their identity, their background, their culture, and their status without prejudice or discrimination.

Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Stephanie Hogan.

Hello, my name is Stephanie Hogan. And I've taught at Mount Rainier IB World School since 2008. I would like to encourage the school board to adopt Resolution 02-25, Our Schools, Our Promise-- A Stand for Every Student. Belonging, support student academic success and emotional wellbeing. The IB mission is to create a better and more peaceful world. Students who feel included and have a strong sense of belonging make this mission a reality. I am proud to work in a district focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

At Mount Rainier, you can hear a mixture of languages and laughter on the soccer pitch, the baseball field, and tennis courts, because all of our students, regardless of their home language, are welcome in our intramural sports. Through the ELA curriculum, students are given the opportunity to read authors from a variety of cultural, national backgrounds.

This creates an environment for students to develop empathy, which increases positive inclusiveness. These are just some of the examples of the cultural belonging structures in place at my school, and that we would want to continue as a district that values all students and their families and preparing students for the future they choose. So please, again, approve Resolution 02-25, Our Students, Our Promise-- A Stand for Every Student. Thank you.

[CHEERING, APPLAUSE]

Thank you. Can I have Anne Slater?

My name is Anne Slater. I'm a school district employee, and I live in SeaTac. And I'm speaking tonight on behalf of Teamsters 763, which represents about 1,000 classified staff at Highline. We urge the school board to pass the resolution, Our Schools, Our Promise-- A Stand for Every Student. Many Highline 763 members live in district and are parents of Highline students.

The majority of us are women, and many are people of color, immigrants, and queer folks. Creating a safe and welcoming community impacts us very personally. Teamsters are here not only to support our union members, but also to stand in solidarity with the students and families who we serve and work with every day. Together, we can say no to the federal administration's campaign of fear and intimidation. And instead--

[APPLAUSE]

Instead, we can celebrate and defend the diversity that is Highline. The school board has the power to send an important message about equity by passing this resolution. And we urge you to do so.

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

Thank you. Sandy Hunt.

Hi, I'm Sandy Hunt, speaking as an individual.

[LAUGHTER]

Despite the fact that people assumed I would be here every week once I retired, I have proven them wrong. But Resolution 02-24 has brought me back into the Highline fold to ask you to support it, and not only for my grandchildren, who live in the district when they're not living in Colombia, and all the students in Highline.

This is a timely, but unfortunately necessary, resolution to show our community a light, a way forward, where we can push against the bullying, we can push against the illegal, and we can push against the despicable actions, words that are coming out of Washington, DC. So I strongly urge you to support this resolution and serve as a model for our community. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Benjamin Folgers.

Good evening, board. My name is Ben Folgers. I teach MIP language and lit at Mount Rainier High School. I'll start, as so many of us are, by speaking on the proposed Resolution 02-25 to take a stand for every student. After the inauguration, I had so many of my students come into school the next day afraid that their families would be separated, that their health care would be ripped away, that their right to their identities would be stripped away.

They came to me talking about how afraid they were for their parents, not knowing if they would be there when they got home from school. So many came to me feeling like they would be targeted for being trans or nonbinary, and therefore be at physical risk. So I am proud that Highline has introduced this resolution to reaffirm their word, to reaffirm policy and action. All of our students have a right to public education, regardless of their identities or their immigration status. So for our district to take this stand means that students and their families will know that we stand for them. So I urge you to vote yes.

Second, I also want to lift Highline for prioritizing literacy work. This work is so incredibly necessary in our schools if we want to address equity in our schools. Because as we all should know, literacy is equity. I am so proud of my colleagues for committing to this work. We hear so often that educators are not doing enough for our kids, and that educators are not prioritizing this work. But whether it is math, science, history, or health, our students have to read. And all of our teachers are committed to this work and are trying it every day. In fact, I have a few of them behind me. Raise your hand if you're an educator.

[CHEERING]

OK. Raise your hand if you're from Mount Rainier.

[CHEERING]

Now, please raise your hand if you've tried on and engaged reading strategy.

Yes, sir!

Raise your hand if you've modeled explicit reading strategies to your students.

One time!

Raise your hand if you've planned lessons to increase cognitive load.

Woo!

So, as you can see, despite national and sometimes local rhetoric, educators are here. And we are-- [MUTED].

[CHEERING, APPLAUSE]

Can I please have Sandra Aguila come on up? Sandra Aguila. "A-gee-la."

Sandra "Ah-gee-la."

Buenas noches. Hello, my name is Sandra Aguila, retired and substitute teacher. I came to this meeting due to the urgency of supporting the resolution to take a position of actions, solidarity and compassion with our immigrant communities and the LGBTQ community. Supporting our students to feel safe in school environments is crucial to their successful development.

I know that the attacks we are facing are intended to scare people, but fear can paralyze us. Our schools must be a sanctuary of protection for our families and the students. I applaud this resolution. More needs to be done after passing this resolution. For example, joining trainings that the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network is giving to establish rapid action responses in case ICE is present in schools. The district must be ready to protect and provide guidance to principals as well as teachers to respond if such crisis occurs. It is important to train the staff and the students so they know what their rights are when facing ICE.

I hope this resolution goes further. The attacks are not only to us immigrants. It is against our transgender community, against workers, women, union leaders, unions, against the gains around diversity and education, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. We should all know what our rights are, constitutional rights are, regardless of our origin, legal status, sexual orientation, or the color of the skin, or economic status, and whatever, whatever, to the end. Thank you. And I hope this resolution goes further. Thank you.

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Can we have Annie Sweers?

Hello, good evening. I'm here on behalf of Girls Inc. of the Pacific Northwest.

Can we have you speak into the microphone a little bit? Thank you.

Good evening. On behalf of Girls Inc. of the Pacific Northwest, we would like to thank Highline School District for your continued support of our programming and to the board for moving to pass Resolution 02-25 this evening. As a youth-serving organization, we share a similar mission, to protect LGBTQIA+ students, and also aim to create safe and equitable school environments for after school programming.

Girls Inc. is committed to providing the comprehensive Girls Inc. experience to girls, including those who identify as girls regardless of their assigned sex at birth and those who are establishing their gender identity or expression during their time with us. It's our affiliate and national position that our programs will not discriminate or exclude youth from our programming based on their gender identity or gender expression.

This position maintains our commitment to gender equality and justice by welcoming cisgender girls, transgender girls, nonbinary youth, intersex youth, and youth who are exploring or questioning their gender identity. No youth will be turned away from our groups because of their sex, pronouns, chosen names, outward appearances, or sexuality. It is our hope that the board continues to elevate and support community partners like ourselves. And we will continue to cultivate that culture of belonging that is central to the Highline Public Schools promise. Thank you.

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Next up, Rose Johnson.

I am here to express my support of Resolution 02-25. Let's get down to what it's really about-- DEIA. I don't know why we always neglect to mention the A. Executive orders certainly remember it. A is for accessibility. It is my student in a wheelchair. It is my veteran colleague with the traumatic brain injury. It is my deaf student. It is my student with dyslexia.

It is a simple question for me. If we are to live up to our promise of every student known by name, strength, and need, we are obligated to consider their unique backgrounds, identities, and oppressions. Without understanding the complexity of their experience, we simply cannot execute this promise. At the last board meeting, I heard testimony that said we are sacrificing instructional time to "teach equity."

Since 2008, I have taught at four high schools in this district and have never seen a minute of instruction lost to DEIA teaching. The reality on the ground is this-- we make our classrooms accessible and inclusive. We recognize our students' experiences. In my 11th grade language arts class, we are writing personal statements for university admissions. My student who wants to write about racial constructs is encouraged to.

My student who wants to write about their religious belief is encouraged to. My student who wants to write about how their family guides their values is encouraged to. That is what DEIA looks like in my classroom. It means expansiveness. It means students are welcome to bring their whole selves to the learning environment. It means being heard, seen, and valued for exactly who you are. No masks, no shame, just your true self. That is education that empowers students and transforms lives.

[BEEPING]

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Krystal Correa.

Hi. Oh! Hi. Good evening. My name is Krystal Correa. As you probably know, I'm a school social worker in the district. And I'm here to be in support of Resolution 02-25. I know that resolutions like this are a first step towards continuing to create welcoming environments, where students feel like they belong and where they're heard. And I know in my work, just being able to be there with a family or a student who's going through something really makes a big difference. And I know that this resolution does that. We'll send a strong message that that can continue to happen.

I'm also here as a queer person individually in the district. And this helps me continue to want to show up as an employee, knowing that I will be seen in my fullness and my wholeness so that I can, in turn, give that to my students and the families that I support as well. So thank you for putting this at the forefront. In a time when we're losing a lot of really excellent teachers and staff, resolutions like this really show us that this is a place that we continue to want to be. So I really urge you to say yes to this resolution. Thank you for listening. My colleagues had excellent things to say. So I'll just leave it at that. Thanks.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. Next up, Alex Myrick.

Good evening, directors. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are close to your hearts. And no executive order from the White House will change your minds. Let's take a closer look. Diversity. Our students speak English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, Amharic, Punjabi, Arabic, Khmer, and 80 other languages. What do they all have in common? They all need a basic education, especially to read and write in English.

Equity. We can agree to disagree on whether equity or equality should be our goal. I hope we can agree that adequate reading and writing skills are essential to student achievement. With literacy comes not only academic success, but improved self-esteem, informed decision-making, economic opportunity, and the ability to be a lifelong learner. Without it, achievement gaps will never close.

Inclusion. You preach inclusion and belonging. Your website proclaims a commitment to, quote, "ensure that all children achieve their potential," unquote. I can't think of a more potent way to exclude a portion of your students, especially minorities, than to allow them to remain illiterate. Not long ago, Highline Public Schools were ranked at 50% academically statewide. Now we are in the bottom 20%

You keep spending more money, but student achievement keeps decreasing. You spend far above the state average, over \$22,000 per student, per year. And yet, 50% of your students are three years behind academically. Your budget is \$337 million. You find money to fund a multitude of trendy leftist programs. But you refuse to fund literacy programs. We elected two directors who wanted to prioritize academics. You hounded them out of office. Now we have over 17,000 students represented by only three directors. So far, none of you has demonstrated the courage or even the common sense to stand up for-- [MUTED].

Victoria Carlson.

Oh. All right, it's a little nerve-wracking being up here. But hello, board members and Dr. Duran. My name is Victoria Carlson. And I work at Bow Lake Elementary as a fifth grade case manager that's part of the LOA for flexible case managing.

Woo!

I wanted to share the celebrations and positives that are going on in our inclusive school. Being a flexible case manager, I have had the opportunity to co-teach in a fifth grade general education classroom to bring my special education skill set to all students. Inclusion and co-teaching offer significant benefits to students, fostering an environment where all learners, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds, can thrive.

[DEEP BREATH]

By creating these classrooms where students with diverse learning needs can learn alongside their peers, we cultivate empathy, collaboration, and mutual respect. Co-teaching, where educators with different expertise work together, ensures that all students receive tailored support, benefiting from a variety of teaching methods. This collaboration approach enhances individualized learning, promotes social interaction, and helps students develop critical life skills for all students.

We are creating the future generation that is going to be more accepting of everyone. Ultimately, inclusion and co-teaching provides every student with the tools they need to succeed academically and socially, empowering them to reach their full potential in a supportive, dynamic environment. Honestly, go Highline on all the inclusive practices that we're doing. And we're very excited to see what's to come.

[CHEERING, APPLAUSE]

Thank you very much. Can I have Gared Contawe? Gared? Gared. You don't have to run.

OK. Oh, my goodness. Hard to follow that up. Good evening, school board. My name is Gared Contawe. I am the elementary music teacher at Bow Lake. So to follow up with more successes at Bow Lake, inclusion is key to meeting diverse learning needs, as Victoria had just said. All of our students have multiple options to engage meaningfully in all of our content areas.

I'd like to specifically shout out our hard-of-hearing and deaf teachers who are here with us this evening. We are the only elementary school-- yes, clap for that. We're the only elementary school that has a deaf and hard-of-hearing program. So the work that they do is meaningful. Our students are learning the language, ASL, on top of English, on top of all of their daily needs, on top of the content that they're learning, right? And so I really just want to make sure we shout that out.

All of our staff are really on board to making sure that, specifically, our deaf and hard-of-hearing students, on top of all of our students with special needs, are included in every space possible. Me, as a specific music teacher, I wanted to take the last minute or so to share what's successful in our music and our art classrooms that we have at Bow Lake.

Me specifically, I've been with our school for now, what, 3 and 1/2-ish years. And some of our students I've had since kindergarten. And some of our special needs students have participated in terms of sitting in our room. I've had some students who refuse to come in my room. As of the past two weeks, some of those students have participated for the first time, just because I've given them the opportunity to be in the room.

[APPLAUSE]

Yes.

[LAUGHS]

And so, really with inclusion, giving them the opportunity to participate meaningfully in all class content areas, giving them the opportunity to maybe one day, instead of sitting in the room, they'll come and join our class circle and play the drum with me, like one of my students did today for the first time. And with that, I say thank you.

Thank you very much.

[CHEERING, APPLAUSE]

Veronica Fairchild. Veronica Fairchild.

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

Hello, I'm Veronica Fairchild. I'm the IB coordinator for Middle Years and Diploma program. And Mount Rainier is one of the oldest IB schools in the state, starting our program in 1987. But we are also a member of a small group of schools that have both the Middle Years and the Diploma programs. When people think of IB, they usually only have in mind the Diploma program for 11th and 12th graders. But tonight, I'm going to talk about the Middle Years Program, which serves our ninth and 10th grade students.

In the Middle Years Program, students are taught and practice the approaches to learning-- self-management, critical thinking, communication, research, and social skills-- in all their classes. These skills engender success in school and the future our students choose, along with promoting the IB mission of creating a more peaceful world. The personal project required of all 400-plus Mount Rainier sophomores is where students get to apply the approaches to learning they've been practicing to the project of their choice.

The personal project is student-driven and independent. Teachers are there to support and give feedback, but all the moves are the student's decision. The emphasis is not on the grade, nor on the perfect outcome, rather on the process and the personal growth, the learning of the students. Some of our 10th grade teachers are here tonight who supported the students through the different phases of the project-- identifying a topic, planning the creation of a product, deciding on personal learning goals, doing research, writing, and eventually presenting.

Our students will be presenting their projects the evening of March 25. And I invite the school board members to come see them. I have a few more seconds. So a couple of the projects-- researching the 40-hour workweek, researching the history of the homelessness in Washington State, documenting the benefits of therapy, and exploring mental health nursing. Thank you.

[CHEERING, APPLAUSE]

Thank you. Patricia Bailey.

The Highline School Board frequently states it values inclusion. However, with the Institutional Policy 32-11 in 2020, you have participated in an unprecedented culture of exclusion never before seen in the United States. These directives have likely caused longlasting psychological harm, reducing student engagement and attendance. Over the weekend, the father of a high school student in our state shared his experience regarding his teenage daughter.

When her school made it known that biological boys were allowed in the girls' bathrooms, she was horrified. This shy, sensitive student told her father that she simply could not go to school anymore. She was adamant. Her father felt helpless to protect his child and was left to explain that staying home wasn't an option. His daughter reported that the boys were teasing the girls about their new license to invade girls' spaces, and it was all so upsetting.

She finally consented to return to school, but had figured out something to help her feel safe. Her friends felt similarly. So they made an agreement. If one had to use the restroom, they would all go together, and the other girls would stand guard against any intrusions. In addition, they resolved to never undress in the locker rooms or use the showers.

Sadly, these girls could not depend on responsible adults to help them, and instead had to resort to protecting each other. But common sense is making a comeback. And institutionalized misogyny is being overturned. We can't be marginalizing half of the population on behalf of an activist agenda. It's time to change Policy 32-11. Thank you.

Thank you. And that concludes our communications for this evening. We're going to move on to our action items, part one. Give me a quick second. [INAUDIBLE] 4.1. This is motion to approve Resolution 02-25, Our Schools, Our Promise, and a Stand for Every Student. And this evening is that we are going to read the resolution and have comments and questions, and then read the resolution prior to the vote. With that said, directors, any comments or questions?

I actually want to give a little bit of background for the resolution. So in recent statements and actions at the federal level have targeted communities that are integral to our Highline community. These communities include the immigrant communities and the LGBTQIA+ community, especially members of the transgender community. This targeting has caused fear and uncertainty among students, families, and staff.

The actions taken may violate state or federal law and negatively impact the district's ability to create a culture of belonging, as called for in our strategic plan. The purpose of this resolution is to ensure that our community, especially those community members who have been targeted by federal actions, is aware that Highline does not support or agree with those actions. Highline will stand for the rights of all members of our community to live free from harassment, discrimination, and bullying, regardless of their identity and personal characteristics.

[CHEERING, APPLAUSE]

So I just wanted to give background. Do you want to give--

Thank you. So, Director Tidholm, any questions or comments?

No questions. But just to reiterate what Director Alvarez said, just in support of our community, I've said some things in previous board meetings that were not popular to some. And that's OK. But I stand on the fact that this nation was built by immigrants and stolen by the Indigenous people and built on the backs of people that were stolen and brought here. And in this current political environment, with everything going on, I definitely stand by and behind and for all of our community, all of our families, and all of our babies from all backgrounds. And that's all I have.

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

And I just want to share that us board directors are committed to standing up for what is right. This resolution is one step in ensuring that we are continuing to do so. It affirms that our commitment to our students and our community, regardless of religion, gender, language, or immigration status, we are making it clear that we are standing for a culture of belonging, where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and safe. So thank you for that. So we're going to move on to reading the resolution. With that.

Resolution 02-25, Our Schools, Our Promise-- A Stand for Every Student. A resolution affirming that District's commitment to creating a safe and welcoming schools and upholding state and federal laws and district policies and procedures. Whereas, Highline Public Schools is proud to be a diverse community of students, staff, families, volunteers, and community members representing multiple countries, cultures, and languages, and identities.

And whereas, Highline's strategic plan prioritizes a culture of belonging in which all are welcomed, valued, and safe. And whereas, Highline is committed to ensuring every member of our community feels safe and supported, regardless of disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, immigration/citizenship status, religion, ancestry, family compositions, or physical characteristics.

Whereas, the state legislature has recognized the value of inclusive learning materials, defining inclusive as those that reflect the histories, contributions, and perspectives of historically marginalized and underrepresented groups, and confirms inclusive curricula, improves students' mental health, academic performance, attendance, and graduation rates of historically marginalized and underrepresented communities. SB5462, 2024. And--

Whereas, Washington law protects individuals from discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sex, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or disability, ensuring equal access to education and opportunity. And whereas, federal law, as established in *Plyler versus Doe*, 1982, guarantees the right of all children, regardless of immigration status, to a public education.

And whereas, the Highline School Board is committed to policies and practices that uphold students' rights and dignity, ensuring safe and equitable learning environments, and comply with Washington State law, federal law, and district policies and procedures. And whereas, recent statements and actions at the federal level are causing uncertainty and fear among some students, families, and staff.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Highline School Board is committed to upholding district policies and state laws, regardless of federal actions. Be it further resolved that the Highline School Board and district leadership will use all lawful powers to protect our LGBTQIA+ students and community members through implementation of federal and state laws and district policies, including Policy and Procedure 32-11.

Be it further resolved that the district shall not tolerate discriminatory behavior, including antisemitic actions and other forms of religious harassment. Be it further resolved that the Highline School Board of Directors reaffirms its commitment to creating safe and equitable school environments through district policies prohibiting all types of bullying, discrimination, and harassment. Principals, teachers, students, and families are encouraged to immediately report such behaviors, according to district policies.

Be it further resolved that District shall communicate this resolution to district staff, families, and other stakeholders. Now, therefore, it be resolved that the Highline School Board of Directors adopts this resolution on the fifth day of March, 2025. With that, can I please have a motion?

I move that the Highline School Board adopt Resolution 02-25, Our Schools, Our Promise-- A Stand for Every Student.

I'll second.

Roll call, please.

Vice President Tidholm.

Yea.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

President Van.

Yea.

This motion passes three to none.

[APPLAUSE, CHEERING]

Thank you, everybody. Moving on to 4.2. This is motion to approve School Board director vacancy appointments. I'm going to start off right off the bat. Just want to thank everybody who has applied and participated in the interviews for the two open board seats for District 4 and 5. The level of interest and dedication to our schools speaks volumes about our community and our commitment to Highline students. I also want to thank everyone who has offered suggestions for interview questions. With that said, we're going to speak about District 4 first. Directors, any questions or comments?

Director Alvarez, would you like to go first? If you have nothing-- I don't think he has anything. Director Tidholm.

OK. Yeah, I also would like to thank everybody for taking the time to come out and sit for our interviews and to put in the applications. I would like to move to name three finalists for the District 4 position, being Damarys Espinoza, Kenneth Kemp, and Carlos Ruiz, if I have a second.

I'll second that.

Roll call, please.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

Director Tidholm.

Yea.

President Van.

Yea.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you very much. And then we're going to move on to District 5. Any questions or comments?

So I'll go ahead. And then I do have-- so I also want to give thanks to District 5 candidates who interview on 2/26. I want to ensure that we have heard from all the voices in District 5. Thank you, everyone. I really enjoyed hearing the diversity of perspectives from the larger group of the candidates for District 4 as well. I'm going to make a motion to reopen the application window for District 5 until March 13 at 9:00 AM.

The current District 5 candidates will remain in consideration and would not need to reapply. The new candidates would be interviewed on 3/15. Therefore, I move that the Highline School Board reopen the District 5 application until March 13 at 9:00 AM. And again, the candidates who interviewed that day do not need to reapply. We would just reopen it until March 13 at 9:00 AM.

I'll second.

Roll call, please.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

Vice President Tidholm.

Yea.

President Van.

Yea.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you very much. We're going to move on to our superintendent's update.
Dr. Duran.

Yes, thank you, President Van. This is a wonderful night. Just want to take a moment of privilege here. I know my family is watching at home. So, just proud to be here in Highline. And to my boys, Mateo and Joaquin, our ancestors came from homes with dirt floors. They did so much for us to be here. And this resolution tonight is a stand for people, a stand for people like our ancestors. We are here to protect and to serve those. I love you, boys. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

I just really want to thank everyone for being here tonight. This is a powerful moment for us. It makes me really proud to be here in Highline. And I'll just say Highline proud, Highline proud. This resolution the board has passed, I really want to thank the board for your courage and your leadership in doing this tonight. And as Director Alvarez says, this is really declaration that Highline will continue to stand for the rights of all members of our community to live free from harassment, discrimination, bullying, regardless of their identity and personal characteristics.

And we know this work will not stop with the resolution. We remain committed to ensuring every student in Highline feels welcome and valued and safe, and receives a quality of education they deserve. So are you with me in that commitment to ensure that our families and our students continue to be safe? Yes?

[CHEERING, APPLAUSE]

And I challenge our community members out there watching tonight to please stand with us in this commitment and to let us know about what your commitment is and what you can do to continue to support our students and our families and our community. Now, more than ever, we need protectors in this world. We need people that will serve others with humbleness and for justice. And now it's my pleasure and honor to invite Jeb Binns, the Highline Education Association president, to come to the podium to share a few remarks. Welcome, Jeb.

[APPLAUSE]

Good evening. This is a good evening. It really is a good evening. Thank you. And I appreciate those wearing red today and all of those who wore red yesterday in a national day of looking to support schools, to fund our public schools across this country, especially in the light of the challenges that we face, shall we say.

I want to continue a trend I started last week-- with my feedback of the microphone-- in sharing school joy and some of the places that I visited this week. Rachel Nielsen at Pacific Middle School, working on teaching absolute value to students and coming up with a unique way to do it. Daniel Del Riego, over at Glacier, teaching the components of art.

Darrin Stolz at Raisbeck Aviation High School, who provided me with an amazing opportunity to teach a lesson about F-14 Tomcats to his advisory students. The fun facts that I can spill about the 1980s version of the movie *Top Gun* is just on point. The students were rather surprised about the things that I told them. Ryan Reilly celebrating the backbeat and the miracle of the two turntable revolution, all puns intended, at White Center Heights.

Zach Beasley lifting up the wonders of [INAUDIBLE] and the heroic spread of amazing culture. Dr. Jesus Torres pushing on the thinking of his Highline High School College in the Classroom US history students, encouraging kids to be civically and engaged and critically thinking and listening. Lucrecia Chase working on reading strategies to elevate her kids' confidence and comfort in reading.

Xavier Barrios having his students creating their choice websites and writing their content in Spanish. Janae Williams at Parkside working on the lifestyles of bugs and a delightful young scholar named Eve, who invited me to be their classroom substitute teacher whenever Ms. Williams was not feeling well. Regan Walters, over in Des Moines Elementary, working on debates and feverishly getting his students ready for the science SBA.

Jennifer Ferry, the librarian over at North Hill, celebrating the wonders of books in our classroom. This is the joy. This is what it's all about. And I'm going to continue to regale you on the fun things and the people that I meet throughout my adventures over the course of a week or two between school board meetings.

I want to thank you all, and you over there on the screen as well, for passing the Our Schools, Our Students resolution. It was so amazing for me to have the honor of being the president of this awesome organization with tremendous educators and the folks who came out tonight to support our students and to support you and your commitment to our students. And for that, Highline Education Association appreciates you. And thank you very much. Thank you for all you do for our staff, our students, and our community. Thank you.

Thank you, Jeb. This concludes my report tonight.

Thank you very much, Dr. Duran. School Board reports a legislative update. Director Tidholm.

Yes. Give me just a moment, if you would. All right. So we remain focused on the big three funding for MSOC, special education, and transportation. Really disappointed with House Bills 1338, which is MSOC's materials, supplies, and operational costs, as well as 1357, special education. Both bills are extremely underfunded and just bad public policy overall. I'm really hopeful that the Senate version of these bills will prevail, as the House bills would leave students without services and staff without necessary supplies.

Senate Bill 5189, which would support our schools that provide competency education, that made it through the Senate and now the House-- I'm sorry, made it through the Senate and now goes to the House, which has been a high priority topic for Highline for a few years. And it's really great to see it moving through. 7 and 1/2 weeks left in the session, and we still haven't seen the budget. So there's a lot more to come and just trying to stay hopeful. And that is all that I have.

Thank you very much in regards to the legislative update. We're going to move to our directors' reports. With that, Director Alvarez, I'm going to have you start off.

Thank you, President Van. So there was a math competition. Sylvester Middle School Math Counts team placed second at Regionals and is headed to State on March 22. So yay.

[APPLAUSE]

The students competed against other middle schools teams at the Museum of Flight last month. Thank you to the coaches for guiding and supporting these students. Congratulations to the whole team. And good luck at State. And the CFAC debrief, I had an amazing opportunity to be at that and got to spend time at the tables. We went through an amazing activity.

The community-led Capital Facilities Advisory Committee, we met last week. Members tested a ranking process for bond projects using seven key factors. They received updates on current bond projects and enrollment projections. Future meetings will cover facilities assessments, site options, and tax information. The committee aims to recommend a bond plan by next spring for the School Board to consider placing on the November 2026 ballot.

And I also want to say thank you to our amazing staff and community for tonight's support for the resolution. I was thinking a lot during people's comments, during the scheduled communication, thinking about even my own journey and my family's coming here.

As Superintendent Duran talked about protectors, I thought about my parents coming here, and not just to give us a better life and picking the crops that we all eat really nicely and sitting at home in our nice, warm home while we eat our nice salad and our fruits and vegetables, while they are working in 120 degrees and working in 40, 30 degrees. And, well, our nice little salad and enjoying our meals, and no one thinks about those kind of stuff while we enjoy our stuff.

But the other thing is, thinking right now, as my grandson in school, talking to some of his friends where they're living in fear of enforcement showing up at their schools, not understanding why all these horrible things are happening. And now I can go to him and let him know that, you know what, we're doing our best to try and protect our families, our communities. We can't guarantee anything. But what we can guarantee is that we are here as protectors to try and give them an opportunity for them to thrive.

People talk about that this system was made for us to thrive. Some of us had to survive to be here today. This system wasn't made for everyone. People talk about everybody was thriving. When I was going to school in seventh and eighth grade, I was getting paddled because I was speaking my language, because my culture was not accepted. And that was thriving? I wonder how many people thrive while you're being paddled because you're speaking your language. That's not thriving. Somebody needs to wake up so they can realize what thriving really is. Some of us were just barely surviving.

And so now I can say that I'm doing something so our kids can thrive, so they can be proud of speaking their language, and being able to stand up and say, you know what, I am here. People see me. And I'm not just surviving, I am thriving. So I just want to say how proud I am of this district. I'm proud to not just live and be part of a community where we see each other, and we're proud to be just part of Highline. So thank you to everyone. And I'm so thankful to be here. Back to you, President Van.

Thank you very much, Director Alvarez. Director Tidholm.

[CLEARS THROAT]

Excuse me. Yes, last month, Evergreen and Highline students from the Core Plus Construction Program visited the Northwest Labors Facility in Kingston for hands-on learning experience. They got a tour of the training center, explored career pathways in construction, and received guidance on apprenticeships after graduation. This career-connected learning opportunity reflects our commitment to preparing students for the future they choose, whether college, trades, or another career.

As many of you know, I am a graduate of ANEW pre-apprenticeship program. And it's really great having our kids have these different options and just to know what's out there. College is great. It's not for everybody. There's just so much money in the trades. And we're going to face a huge shortage when we have all these baby boomers coming up in retirement shortly.

Another thing, February was Black History Month. And while February is over, our commitment to celebrating Black history and their voices continues. And just a reminder with this resolution today also, that my ancestors' blood was not spilled in vain, that my ancestors' lives were not taken in vain, both on my Black side as well as my Native American ancestors. And to be able to be in this position to stand here unapologetically and to just continue to support our communities and our families is just a great honor.

And also, very grateful for everybody that came out and spoke today. And for Black History Month, we did celebrate and highlight a number of our Black staff, who shared their reflections on Black history, leadership, and culture on our social media, as well as *Our Promise* newsletter. And let's just continue to learn from their stories and reaffirm our commitment to a future of equity, understanding, and opportunity for all, unapologetically, in this beautiful Highline School District. And that is all that I have.

Thank you so much, Director Tidholm. My turn. I just want to celebrate something to our middle school athletic team, to be celebrated for their sportsmanship. I just want to share with you the Middle School International League awarded the Sportsmanship Award to the JV and varsity boys basketball team at Chinook Middle School. In addition to that, the varsity girls soccer team at Glacier, they also received the Sportsman Award. So kudos to them. Way to go, Dragons and Wolves.

[APPLAUSE]

I also want to share just a thanks and gratitude, Jackie and team. Earlier, prior to our board meeting, we had our budget work session. So thank you so much for sharing all of that. There's a lot of work to be done. But also, we need to work with our legislators and keep on pushing them to fund education, MSOC, in our top four priorities there.

And in addition to that, our Literacy Walk. We had 17 schools that were visited by district and school leaders this last month. They observed classroom instruction and spoke with students to understand what truly helps them learn to read and write. So these visits really informed our teaching strategies and trying to find out how to identify our areas for support. So by doing this, it really helped us by listening and learning. And we're strengthening our literacy instruction across Highline. So thank you, everybody, for participating.

In addition, I just want to thank Director Alvarez for volunteering me to be part of the PSESD superintendent search. I am part of the Parents Committee to really showcase or really ask, what do we want as parents for our next ESD superintendent? So I was part of that conversation today. And it was really great to listen to the parents across all of our districts. And we all have one shared vision. It's about our kids and their futures. So thank you for that.

And I thought it was funny, but I really do appreciate you making sure that our Highline voice as a parent, we were at the table. So thank you. That concludes our School Board reports. Moving on to our consent agenda. Any questions or comments? OK, with that said, can I please have a motion to approve?

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

I'll second that.

All in favor--

Aye.

--say aye.

Aye.

Any opposed? Hearing none. Thank you. There's no items removed from the consent agenda. Action items, part two. This is 9.1, motion to approve Resolution 01-25, requesting a waiver from the state high school graduation requirement for Maritime High School. Any questions or comments? Hearing, seeing none. Can I have a motion?

I move that the Highline School Board adopt Resolution 01-25, supporting Maritime High School's application to the State Board of Education for a waiver from credit-based graduation requirements.

I'll second that.

Roll call, please.

Director Tidholm.

Yea.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

President Van.

Yea.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you. Action item 9.2. This is motion to approve original Beverly Park. Change order number 1, form a construction company on PO CP-240096. Any questions or comments on that?

No, these are the ones that we got presentation at the last board meeting. So I think we're good on these.

Thank you. Can I please have a motion?

So I make a motion that the Highline School Board approve change order number 1 to form a construction company on purchase order number CP-24096 in the amount of \$1,301,833, plus Washington State sales tax, bringing the revised purchase order amount of \$5,682,538, plus Washington State sales tax.

Can I have a second?

I will second. But to clarify the dollar amount, I think you switched a couple up. The total is \$5,628,538. And I'll second.

Thank you for that.

Roll call, please.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

Vice President Tidholm.

Yea.

President Van.

Yea.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you. Action item 9.3, motion to approve change order number 2 for McKinstry assessment of facility condition. Any questions or comments? I do have a quick comment. I just want to thank you, Dr. Duran, for initiating this facility condition assessment. It is really important. In addition to what our CFAC team is doing,

I think having a professional business go out there and do an assessment on an annual basis and allowing a dashboard to be presented to yourself, but also the board, so we can see the condition of our schools. And it's making sure that all of our schools are in a safe manner. We had teachers from Choice that came at the last meeting, and you took charge of that. So I greatly appreciate this, in addition to that.

Yes.

Any other questions or comments?

None.

OK. Can I have a motion, please?

I move the Highline School Board approve change order number 2 for the McKinstry facility condition assessment contract totaling \$248,500, with any minor adjustments, additions, or deletions as deemed necessary by the superintendent.

I'll second that.

Roll call, please.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

Vice President Tidholm.

Yea.

President Van.

Yea.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you. Action item 9.4. This is motion to approve Beverly Park at Glendale, the roof replacement and restoration contract with Garland/DBS roof project.

Any questions or comments?

I have none.

OK. Can I have a motion, please?

I move that the Highline School Board approve the roof replacement and restoration contract with Garland/DBS Inc., at a net cost of \$489,576, plus Washington State sales tax of \$49,936 and 75--

Cents?

Cents, for a-- I was like, wait a minute, \$0.75? Sorry. For a total contract amount of \$539,512.75, with any minor additions, deletions, or modifications deemed necessary by the superintendent.

I will second.

Roll call, please.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

Vice President Tidholm.

Yea.

President Van.

Yea.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you. Action item 9.5. This is motion to approve the transportation building replacement project site improvement work award of contract. Any questions or comments on this? I do have a comment. I'm really excited that this building replacement project is underway. It'll be ready, hopefully, by August, September of this year. So I'm really excited about that. With that said, can I please have a motion?

I move that the Highline School Board approve the contract with Comer GC Inc. contractor for the amount of \$1,405,000 and-- I'm sorry, \$1,405,050, including Washington State sales tax with any minor adjustments, additions, or deletions as deemed necessary by the superintendent.

I'll second that.

Roll call, please.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

Director Tidholm.

Yea.

President Van.

Yea.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you. That concludes our action items. We're going to move to intro and action. 10.1, motion to approve correction to the approved salary increases for classified substitute. I just want to do a point of clarification here. The reason why this is coming back to the board-- we approved it at our last meeting-- was that there was a wrong version of the attachment that was submitted, that there was no additional financial impacts or anything. It was just the wrong version of the attachment was placed in there, so.

OK. Thank you for that clarification because I was actually going to ask someone to come up. I was like, if we already had this, why is it up again? So thank you for stating that.

You bet. Can I please have a motion, if there is not any other questions or comments?

So I don't have any other questions. Do you have any questions, Director Tidholm. No?

I do not.

OK. So then I'll move that the Highline School Board approve the corrected classified substitute salary schedule.

And I will second.

Roll call, please.

Vice President Tidholm.

Yea.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

President Van.

Yea.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you very much. That concludes our intro in action. We're going to move to our intro items. It looks like we have seven of those. Here we go. 11.1, this is motion to approve revisions to Board Policy 34-20, anaphylaxis prevention and response. Any questions or comments on this one?

It says revision. So is there a huge revision on it? What is the major revision?

Yes, I'm Michelle Jervis. I'm the director of Health Services. This is my lead nurse, Naisha Erickson.

Michelle, can we have you speak into the microphone? Thank you.

Sorry. So the revision is just adding in the EpiPen policy procedure to have EpiPens in schools for our kids who are usually undiagnosed, and for our McKinney-Vento students.

So followup question in regards to that. This is to ensure that our schools have the EpiPens, regardless if-- I mean, because they're fairly expensive. They're about \$100 for EpiPens to ensure our schools have that readily available for any student, just in case, correct?

Hi. Sorry. I'm Naisha. I'm one of the lead nurses. I just want to clarify that there's been a new standing order that was passed by the state in August. So we'd be in line with that. And students that currently have a diagnosis of anaphylaxis will still be required to have their EpiPens at school. This will be for students that have unknown anaphylaxis at school, with the school nurse on site to give the EpiPen before waiting for 911, and also for our students that maybe for some reason the EpiPen expired, or they're in the McKinney-Vento Program and they are not able to provide an EpiPen, yet are still at school.

Thank you very much. Any other questions or comments? Thank you so much for coming on up.

I do want to note, too, for the EpiPen for School program is providing the EpiPens to the district. And we already have them in district to hand out to schools.

So there is--

There's no--

--financial impact on us?

Not at this time, no.

OK. Perfect. Thank you.

The only impact would be if the EpiPen for School program was to end.

Yeah.

OK.

All right. Thank you very much. Intro item 11.2, motion to approve Microsoft infrastructure licensing renewal. Any questions or comments on that? Tishan was waiting. All right. Move on to 11.3, motion to approve surplus of classroom portables. Any questions or comments on that? Hearing, seeing none.

This is. Intro item 11.4, motion to approve Pacific Middle School replacement project, approval of guaranteed maximum price contract amendment number 1 and PO increase number or-- CP-240033 with Skanska USA Building Company. Any questions or comments on that? Hearing, seeing none.

Not right now.

OK.

[LAUGHS]

[AUDIO OUT]

11.5, this is motion to approve Transportation Building L project, grant of easement to Puget Sound Energy. Any questions or comments?

None.

None right now. So 11.6, motion to approve School Board Resolution number 04-25 to issue non-renewal notices pursuant to a reduction in force to achieve a balanced budget and properly staffed district educational programs and departments. Any questions or comments? Hearing, seeing none.

And then our last intro item, this is motion to approve contract increase between the special ed department and the Emerald Learning Center in the '24-'25 school year. Questions or comments on this? All right. I hear and see none. That concludes our intro items for this evening. Any items add to our next consent agenda.

So I'd like to move, since we got the clarification about the EpiPen and no additional cost added, would be to us moving the 11.1 into our consent agenda. The--

And I'll second. Sorry. Sorry. I was saying I'll second. Apologies. I didn't realize you weren't done.

Oh, no. Well, you knew what I was saying. So, perfect.

So we had a motion to move 11.1-- this is the motion to approve revisions to Board Policy 34-20, the anaphylaxis prevention and response-- to our consent agenda. And it sounds like Director Tidholm seconded. All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Any opposed? Hearing--

Was that an aye from you as well, President Van?

What was that?

Was that a yea--

Yes, I said yea. I thought I said yea. But yea. OK, thank you very much. And that concludes. Can I have a motion to adjourn, please?

I make a motion to adjourn.

And I will second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

You heard me that time, right? Thank you, everybody. We are adjourned.

Thank you, everybody.

Thank you.